Serfojee Rajah. 1829

THE

NAVAL OFFICER;

OR,

SCENES AND ADVENTURES

IN THE

LIFE OF FRANK MILDMAY.

My Muse by no means deals in fiction:
She gathers a repertory of facts,
Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,
But mostly treats of human things and acts.
* * * * *
Love, war, a tempest—surely there's variety;
Also a seasoning slight of lucubration;
A bird's-eye view, too, of that wild, society;
A slight glance thrown on men of every station.

DON JUAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1829.

THE

NAVAL OFFICER.

CHAPTER I.

These are the errors, and these are the fruits of mis-spending our prime youth at the schools and universities, as we do, either in learning mere words, or such things chiefly as were better unlearned.

MILTON.

My father was a gentleman and a man of considerable property. In my infancy and childhood I was weak and sickly, but the favourite of my parents beyond all my brothers and sisters, because they saw that my mind was far superior to my sickly frame, and feared they should never raise me to manhood; contrary, however,

to their expectations, I surmounted all these untoward appearances, and attracted much notice from my liveliness, quickness of repartee, and impudence; qualities which have been of much use to me through life.

I can remember that I was both a coward and a boaster; but I have frequently remarked that the quality which we call cowardice in a child, is no more than implying a greater sense of danger, and consequently a superior intellect. We are all naturally cowards: education and observation teach us to discriminate between real and apparent danger; pride teaches the concealment of fear, and habit renders us indifferent to that from which we have often escaped with impunity. It is related of the Great Frederick that he misbehaved the first time he went into action; and it is certain that a novice in such a situation, can no more command all his resources than a boy when first bound apprentice to a shoemaker can make a pair of shoes. We must learn our trade, whether it be to stand steady before the

enemy, or to stitch a boot: practice alone can make a *Hoby* or a *Wellington*.

I pass on to my school days, when the most lasting impressions are made. The foundation of my moral and religious instruction had been laid with care by my excellent parents; but, alas! from the time I quitted the paternal roof not one stone was added to the building, and even the traces of what existed were nearly obliterated by the deluge of vice which threatened soon to overwhelm me. Sometimes, indeed, I feebly, but ineffectually endeavoured to stem the torrent; at others I suffered myself to be borne along with all its fatal rapidity. I was frank, generous, quick, and mischievous; and I must admit that a large portion of what sailors call "devil" was openly displayed, and a much larger portion latently deposited in my brain and bosom. My ruling passion, even in this early stage of life, was pride. Lucifer himself, if he ever was seven years old, had not more.

If I have gained a fair name in the service, if I have led instead of followed, it must be ascribed to this my ruling passion. The world has often given me credit for better feelings, as the source of action, but I am not writing to conceal, and the truth must be told.

I was sent to school to learn Latin and Greek, which there are various ways of teaching. Some tutors attempt the *suaviter in modo*, my schoolmaster prefered the *fortiter in re*; and, as the boatswain said, by the "instigation" of a large knotted stick, he drove knowledge into our skulls as a caulker drives oakum into the seams of a ship. Under such tuition we made astonishing progress; and whatever my less desirable acquirements may have been, my father had no cause to complain of my deficiency in classic lore. Superior in capacity to most of my schoolfellows, I seldom took the pains to learn my lesson previous to going up with my class: "the master's blessing," as we called it, did occasion-

ally descend on my devoted head, but that was a bagatelle; I was too proud not to keep pace with my equals, and too idle to do more.

Had my schoolmaster been a single man, my stay under his care might have been prolonged to my advantage; but unfortunately, both for him and for me, he had a helpmate, and her peculiarly unfortunate disposition was the means of corrupting those morals over which it was her duty to have watched with the most assiduous care. *Her* ruling passions were suspicion and avarice, written in legible characters in her piercing eyes and sharp-pointed nose. She never supposed us capable of telling the truth, so we very naturally never gave ourselves the trouble to cultivate a useless virtue, and seldom resorted to it unless it answered our purpose better than a lie. This propensity of Mrs. Higginbottom, converted our candour and honesty into deceit and fraud. Never believed, we cared little about the accuracy of our assertions; half-starved, through her meanness and parsimony,

we were little scrupulous as to the ways and means, provided we could satisfy our hunger; and thus we soon became as great adepts in the elegant accomplishments of lying and thieving, under her tuition, as we did in Greek and Latin under that of her husband.

A large orchard, fields, garden, and poultry-yard, attached to the establishment, were under the care and superintendence of the mistress, who usually selected one of the boys as her prime minister and confidential adviser. This boy, for whose education his parents were paying some sixty or eighty pounds per annum, was permitted to pass his time in gathering up the windfalls; in watching the hens, and bringing in their eggs, when their cackling throats had announced their safe accouchement; looking after the broods of young ducks and chickens, *et hoc genus omne;* in short, doing the duty of what is usually termed the odd man in the farm-yard. How far the parents would have been satisfied with this arrangement, I leave my readers to

guess; but to us who preferred the manual to mental exertion, exercise to restraint, and any description of cultivation to that of cultivating the mind, it suited extremely well; and accordingly no place in the gift of government was ever the object of such solicitude and intrigue, as was to us schoolboys the situation of collector and trustee of the eggs and apples.

I had the good fortune to be early selected for this important post, and the misfortune to lose it soon after, owing to the cunning and envy of my schoolfellows and the suspicion of my employers. On my first coming into office, I had formed the most sincere resolutions of honesty and vigilance; but what are good resolutions, when discouraged on the one hand by the revilings of suspicion, and assailed on the other by the cravings of appetite? My morning's collection was exacted from me to the very last nut, and the greedy eyes of my mistress seemed to inquire for more. Suspected when innocent, I became guilty out of revenge; was detected and

dismissed. A successor was appointed, to whom I surrendered all my offices of trust, and having perfect leisure, I made it my sole business to supplant him

It was an axiom in mathematics with me at that time, though not found in Euclid, that wherever I could enter my head, my whole body might follow. As a practical illustration of this proposition, I applied my head to the arched hole of the hen-house door, and by scraping away a little dirt, contrived to gain admittance, and very speedily transferred all the eggs to my own chest When the new purveyor arrived, he found no ıing but " a beggarly account of empty boxes;" and his perambulations in the orchard and garden, for the same reason, were equally *fruitless*. The pilferings of the orchard and garden I confiscated as droits; but when I had collected a sufficient number of eggs to furnish a nest, I gave information of my pretended discovery to my mistress, who, thin' g she had not changed for the better, dismissed my succes-

sor, and received me into favour again. I was, like many greater men, immediately reinstated in office when it was discovered that they could not do without me. I once more became chancellor of the hen-roost and ranger of the orchard, with greater power than I had possessed before my disgrace. Had my mistress looked half as much in my face as she did into my hatful of eggs, she would have read my guilt; for at that unsophisticated age I could blush, a habit long since discarded in the course of my professional duties.

In order to preserve my credit and my situation, I no longer contented myself with windfalls, but assisted nature in her labours, and greatly lightened the burthen of many a loaded fruit-tree; by these means, I not only gratified the avarice of my mistress at her own expence, but also laid by a store for my own use. On my restoration to office, I had an ample fund in my exchequer to answer all present demands; and by a provident and industrious anticipa-

tion, was enabled to lull the suspicions of my employers and to bid defiance to the opposition. It will readily be supposed that a lad of my acuteness did not omit any technical management for the purposes of disguise; the fruits which I presented were generally soiled with dirt at the ends of the stalks, in such a manner as to give them all the appearance of "*felo de se*," *i. e.* fell of itself. Thus, in the course of a few months, did I become an adept in vice, from the mismanagement of those into whose hands I was entrusted to be strengthened in religion and virtue.

Fortunately for me, as far as my education was concerned, I did not long continue to hold this honourable and lucrative employment. One of those unhappy beings called an usher, peeped into my chest, and by way of acquiring popularity with the mistress and scholars forthwith denounced me to the higher powers. The proofs of my peculation were too glaring, and the amount too serious to be passed over;

I was tried, convicted, condemned, sentenced, flogged, and dismissed in the course of half an hour; and such was the degree of turpitude attached to me on this occasion, that I was rendered for ever incapable of serving in that or any other employment connected with the garden or farm; I was placed at the bottom of the list, and declared to be the worst boy in the school.

This in many points of view was too true; but there was one boy who bade fair to rival me on the score of delinquency; this was Tom Crauford, who from that day became my most intimate friend. Tom was a fine spirited fellow; up to every thing; loved mischief, though not vicious; and was ready to support me in everything through thick and thin; and truly I found him sufficient employment. I threw off all disguise, laughed at any suggestion of reform, which I considered as not only useless, but certain of subjecting me to ridicule and

contempt among my associates. I therefore adopted the motto of some great man "to be rather than seem to be." I led in every danger; declared war against all drivellers and half measures; stole every thing that was eatable from garden, orchard, or hen-house, knowing full well that whether I did so or not, I should be equally suspected. Thenceforward all fruit missed, all arrows shot into pigs, all stones thrown into windows, and all mud spattered over clean linen hung out to dry, were traced to Tom and myself; and with the usual alacrity of an arbitrary police, the space between apprehension and punishment was very short—we were constantly brought before the master, and as regularly dismissed with "his blessing," till we became hardened to blows and to shame.

Thus, by the covetousness of this woman, who was the grey mare, and the folly of the master, who, in any thing but Greek and Latin, was an ass, my good principles were nearly eradicated

from my bosom, and in their place were sown seeds which very shortly produced an abundant harvest.

There was a boy at our school lately imported from the East Indies. We nick-named him Johnny Pagoda. He was remarkable for nothing but ignorance, impudence, great personal strength, and, as we thought, determined resolution. He was about nineteen years of age. One day he incurred the displeasure of the master, who, enraged at his want of comprehension and attention, struck him over the head with the knotted cane. This appeal, although made to the least sensitive part of his frame, roused the indolent Asiatic from his usual torpid state. The weapon, in the twinkling of an eye, was snatched out of the hand, and suspended over the head of the astonished pedagogue, who, seeing the tables so suddenly turned against him, made the signal for assistance. I clapped my hands, shouted "Bravo! lay on Johnny—go it—you have done it now—you

may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb;" but the ushers began to muster round, the boys hung aloof, and Pagoda, uncertain which side the neutrals would take, laid down his arms, and surrendered at discretion.

Had the East Indian followed up his act by the application of a little discipline at the fountain head, it is more than probable that a popular commotion, not unlike that of Mas' Aniello, would have ensued; but the time was not come: the Indian shewed a white feather, was laughed at, flogged, and sent home to his friends, who had intended him for the bar; but foreseeing that he might, in the course of events, chance to cut a figure on the wrong side of it, sent him to sea, where his valour, if he had any, would find more profitable employment.

This unsuccessful attempt of the young Oriental, was the primary cause of all my fame and celebrity in after life. I had always hated school; and this, of all others, seemed to me the most hateful. The emancipation of Johnny

Pagoda convinced me that my deliverance might be effected in a similar manner. The train was laid, and a spark set it on fire. This spark was supplied by the folly and vanity of a fat French dancing master. These Frenchmen are ever at the bottom of mischief. Mrs. Higginbottom, the master's wife, had denounced me to Monsieur Aristide Maugrebleu as a *mauvais sujet* ; and as he was a creature of her's, he frequently annoyed me to gratify his patroness. This fellow was at that time about forty-five years of age, and had much more experience than agility, having greatly increased his bulk by the roast beef and ale of England. While he taught us the rigadoons of his own country, his vanity induced him to attempt feats much above the cumbrous weight of his frame. I entered the lists with him, beat him at his own trade, and he beat me with his fiddle-stick, which broke in two over my head; then, making one more glorious effort to shew that he would not be outdone, snapped the tendon Achilles,

and down he fell, *hors de combat*, as a dancing master. He was taken away in his gig to be cured, and I was taken into the school-room to be flogged.

This I thought so unjust that I ran away. Tom Crauford helped me to scale the wall; and when he supposed I had got far enough to be out of danger from pursuit, went and gave information, to avoid the suspicion of having aided and abetted. After running a mile, to use a sea phrase, I hove to, and began to compose, in my mind, an oration which I intended to pronounce before my father, by way of apology for my sudden and unexpected appearance; but I was interrupted by the detested usher and half a dozen of the senior boys, among whom was Tom Crauford. Coming behind me as I sat on a stile, they cut short my meditations by a tap on the shoulder, collared and marched me to the right about in double quick time. Tom Crauford was one of those who held me, and outdid himself in zealous invective at my base

ingratitude in absconding from the best of masters, and the most affectionate, tender, and motherly of all school-dames.

The usher swallowed all this, and I soon made him swallow a great deal more. We passed near the side of a pond, the shoals and depths of which were well known to me. I looked at Tom out of the corner of my eye, and motioned him to let me go; and, like a mackarel out of a fisherman's hand, I darted into the water, got up to my middle, and then very coolly, for it was November, turned round to gaze on my escort, who stood at bay, and looked very much like fools. The usher, like a low-bred cur, when he could no longer bully, began to fawn; he entreated and he implored me to think on "my Papa and Mamma; how miserable they would be, if they could but see me; what an increase of punishment I was bringing on myself by such obstinacy." He held out, by turns, coaxes and threats; in short, every thing but an amnesty, to which I considered myself entitled, having

been driven to rebellion by the most cruel persecution.

Argument having failed, and there being no volunteers to come in and fetch me out of the water, the poor usher, much against his inclination, was compelled to undertake it. With shoes and stockings off, and trowsers tucked up, he ventured one foot into the water, then the other; a cold shiver reached his teeth, and made them chatter; but, at length, with cautious tread he advanced towards me. Being once in the water, a step or two farther was no object to me, particularly as I knew I could but be well flogged after all, and I was quite sure of that, at all events, so I determined to have my revenge and amusement. Stepping back, he followed, and suddenly fell over head and ears into a hole, as he made a reach at me. I was already out of my depth, and could swim like a duck, and as soon as he came up, I perched my knees on his shoulders and my hands on his head, and sent him souse

under a second time, keeping him there until he had drank more water than any horse that ever came to the pond. I then allowed him to wallow out the best way he could; and as it was very cold, I listened to the entreaties of Tom and the boys who stood by, cracking their sides with laughter at the poor usher's helpless misery.

Having had my frolic, I came out, and voluntarily surrendered myself to my enemies, from whom I received the same mercy, in proportion, that a Russian does from a Turk. Dripping wet, cold, and covered with mud, I was first shewn to the boys as an aggregate of all that was bad in nature; a lecture was read to them on the enormity of my offence, and solemn denunciations of my future destiny closed the discourse. The shivering fit produced by the cold bath was relieved by as sound a flogging as could be inflicted, while two ushers held me; but no effort of theirs could elicit one groan or sob from me; my teeth were clenched in firm determination of revenge: with this passion my

bosom glowed, and my brain was on fire. The punishment, though dreadfully severe, had one good effect—it restored my almost suspended animation; and I strongly recommend the same remedy being applied to all young ladies and gentlemen who, from disappointed love or other such trifling causes, throw themselves into the water. Had the miserable usher been treated after this prescription, he might have escaped a cold and rheumatic fever, which had nearly consigned him to a country church-yard, in all probability to re-appear at the dissecting-room of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

About this time Johnny Pagoda, who had been two years at sea, came to the school to visit his brother and schoolfellows. I pumped this fellow to tell me all he knew: he never tried to deceive me, or to make a convert. He had seen enough of a midshipman's life, to know that a cockpit was not paradise; but he gave me clear and ready answers to all my questions. I discovered that there was no schoolmaster in the

ship, and that the midshipmen were allowed a pint of wine a-day. A man-of-war, and the gallows, they say, refuses nothing; and as I had some strong presentiment from recent occurrences, that if I did not volunteer for the one, I should, in all probability, be pressed for the other, I chose the lesser evil of the two: and having made up my mind to enter the glorious profession, I shortly after communicated my intention to my parents.

From the moment I had come to this determination, I cared not what crime I committed, in hopes of being expelled from the school. I wrote scurrilous letters, headed a mutiny, entered into a league with the other boys to sink, burn and destroy, and do all the mischief we could. Tom Crauford had the master's child to dry nurse: he was only two years old: Tom let him fall, not intentionally, but the poor child was a cripple in consequence of it for life. This was an accident which under any other circumstances we should have deplored, but to us it was almost a joke

The cruel treatment I had received from these people, had so demoralized me, that those passions, which under more skilful or kinder treatment, had either not been known, or would have lain dormant, were roused into full and malignant activity: I went to school a good hearted boy, I left it a savage. The accident with the child occurred two days before the commencement of the vacation, and we were all dismissed on the following day in consequence. On my return home I stated verbally to my father and mother, as I had done before by letter, that I was resolved to go to sea. My mother wept, my father expostulated. I gazed with apathy on the one, and listened with cold indifference to the reasoning and arguments of the other; a choice of schools was offered to me where I might be a parlour-boarder, and I was to finish at the University, if I would but give up my fatal infatuation. Nothing, however, would do; the die was cast, and for the sea I was to prepare.

What fool was it who said that the happiest time of our lives is passed at school? There may, indeed, be exceptions, but the remark cannot be generalized. Stormy as has been my life, the most miserable part of it (with very little exception) was passed at school; and my mind never received so much injury from any scenes of vice and excess in after life, as it did from the shameful treatment and bad example I met with there. If my bosom burned with fiend-like passions, whose fault was it? How had the sacred pledge, given by the master, been redeemed? Was I not sacrificed to the most sordid avarice, in the first instance, and almost flayed alive in the second, to gratify revenge? Of the filthy manner in which our food was prepared, I can only say that the bare recollection of it excites nausea; and to this hour, bread and milk, suet pudding, and shoulders of mutton, are objects of my deep-rooted aversion. The conduct of the ushers, who were either tyrannical extortioners, or partakers in our crimes—the

constant loss of our clothes by the dishonesty or carelessness of the servants—the purloining our silver spoons, sheets, and towels, when we went away, under the plea of "custom"—the charges in the account for windows which I had never broken, and books which I had never received—the shameful difference between the annual cost promised by the master, and the sum actually charged, ought to have opened the eyes of my father.

I am aware how excellent many of these institutions are, and that there are few so bad as the one I was sent to. The history of my life will prove of what vital importance it is to ascertain the character of the master and mistress as to other points besides teaching Greek and Latin, before a child is entrusted to their care. I ought to have observed, that during my stay at this school, I had made some proficiency in mathematics and algebra.

My father had procured for me a berth on board a fine frigate at Plymouth, and the inter-

val between my nomination and joining was spent by my parents in giving advice to me, and directions to the several tradesmen respecting my equipment. The large chest, the sword, the cocked-hat, the half-boots, were all ordered in succession; and the arrival of each article either of use or ornament was anticipated by me with a degree of impatience which can only be compared to that of a ship's company arrived off Dennose from a three years' station in India, and who hope to be at an anchor at Spithead before sunset. The circumstance of my going to sea affected my father in no other way than as it interfered with his domestic comforts by the immoderate grief of my poor mother. In any other point of view, my choice of a profession was a source of no regret to him. I had an elder brother, who was intended to have the family estates, and who was then at Oxford, receiving an education suitable to his rank in life, and also to learn how to spend his money like a gentleman. Younger brothers are, in

such cases, just as well out of the way, particularly one of my turbulent disposition: a man-of-war, therefore, like *another piece of timber*, has its uses. My father paid all the bills with great philosophy, and made me a liberal allowance, for my age.

The hour of departure drew near; my chest had been sent off by the Plymouth waggon, and a hackney-coach drew up to the door, to convey me to the White Horse Cellar. The letting down of the rattling steps completely overthrew the small remains of fortitude which my dearest mother had reserved for our separation, and she threw her arms round my neck in a frenzy of grief. I beheld her emotions with a countenance as unmoved as the figure-head of a ship; while she covered my stoic face with kisses, and washed it with her tears. I almost wondered what it all meant, and wished the scene was over.

My father helped me out of this dilemma; taking me firmly by the arm, he led me out of the

room: my mother sank upon the sofa, and hid her face in her pocket-handkerchief. I walked as slowly to the coach as common decency would permit. My father looked at me, as if he would inquire of my very inward soul whether I really did possess human feelings? I felt the meaning of this, even in my then tender years; and such was my sense of propriety, that I mustered up a tear for each eye, which, I hope, answered the intended purpose. We say at sea, "When you have no decency, sham a little;" and I verily believe I should have beheld my poor mother in her coffin with less regret than I could have foregone the gay and lovely scenes which I anticipated.

How amply has this want of feeling towards a tender parent been recalled to my mind, and severely punished, in the events of my vagrant life!

CHAPTER II.

Injuries may be atoned for and forgiven; but *insults* admit of no compensation. They degrade the mind in its own esteem, and force it to recover its level by revenge.

JUNIUS.

THERE are certain events in our lives poetically and beautifully described by Moore, as "green spots in memory's waste." Such are the emotions arising from the attainment, after a long pursuit, of any darling object of love or ambition; and although possession and subsequent events may have proved to us that we had over-rated our enjoyment, and experience have shewn us "that all is vanity," still, recollection dwells with pleasure upon the beating

heart, when the present only was enjoyed, and the picture painted by youthful and sanguine anticipation in glowing and delightful colours. Youth only can feel this; age has been often deceived—too often has the fruit turned to ashes in the mouth. The old look forward with distrust and doubt, and backward with sorrow and regret.

One of the red-letter-days of my life, was that on which I first mounted the uniform of a midshipman. My pride and ecstacy were beyond description. I had discarded the school and school-boy dress, and, with them, my almost stagnant existence. Like the chrysalis changed into a butterfly, I fluttered about as if to try my powers; and felt myself a gay and beautiful creature, free to range over the wide domains of nature, clear of the trammels of parents or schoolmasters; and my heart bounded within me at the thoughts of being left to enjoy at my own discretion, the very acmé of all the pleasure that human existence could afford; and I observe

that in this, as in most other cases, I met with that disappointment, which usually attends us. True it is, that in the days of my youth, I did enjoy myself. I was happy for a time, if happiness it could be called; but dearly have I paid for it. I contracted a debt, which I have been liquidating by instalments ever since; nor am I yet emancipated. Even the small portion of felicity that fell to my lot on this memorable morning was brief in duration, and speedily followed by chagrin.

But to return to my uniform. I had arrayed myself in it; my dirk was belted round my waist; a cocked hat, of an enormous size, stuck on my head; and, being perfectly satisfied with my own appearance, at the last survey which I had made in the glass, I first rang for the chambermaid, under pretence of telling her to make my room tidy, but, in reality, that she might admire and compliment me, which she very wisely did; and I was fool enough to give her half-a-crown and a kiss, for I felt myself quite a man. The

waiter, to whom the chambermaid had in all probability communicated the circumstance, presented himself, and having made a low bow, offered the same compliments, and received the same reward, save the kiss. Boots would, in all probability, have come in for his share, had he been in the way, for I was fool enough to receive all their fine speeches as if they were my due, and to pay for them at the same time in ready money. I was a gudgeon and they were sharks; and more sharks would soon have been about me, for I heard them, as they left the room, call "boots" and "ostler," of course to assist in lightening my purse.

But I was too impatient to wait on my Captain and see my ship—so I bounced down the stairs, and in the twinkling of an eye, was on my way to Stonehouse, where my vanity received another tribute, by a raw recruit of marine raising his hand to his head, as he passed by me. I took it as it was meant, raised my hat off my head, and shuffled by with much

self-importance. One consideration, I own, mortified me—this was that the *natives* did not appear to admire me half so much as I admired myself. It never occurred to me then, that middies were as plentiful at Plymouth Dock as black boys at Port Royal, though, perhaps, not of so much value to their masters. I will not shock the delicacy of my fair readers by repeating all the vulgar alliterations with which my noviciate was greeted, as I passed in review before the ladies of North Corner, who met me in Fore-street. Unsophisticated as I then was, in many points, and certainly in this, I thought them extremely ill-bred. Fortunately for me, the prayers of a certain description of people never prevail, otherwise I should have been immediately consigned to a place, from which, I fear, all the masses of France and Italy would not have extricated me.

I escaped from these Syrens without being bound to the mast, like Ulysses; but, like him, I had nearly fallen a victim to a modern Poly-

phemus; for though he had not one eye in the middle of his forehead, after the manner of his prototype, yet the rays from both his eyes meeting together at the tip of his long nose, gave him very much that appearance. Ignorance, sheer ignorance, in this, as in many other cases, was the cause of my disaster. A party of officers, in full uniform, were coming from a court martial. "Oh ho!" said I, "here come some of us." I seized my dirk in my left hand, as I saw they held their swords, and I stuck my right hand into my bosom as some of them had done. I tried to imitate their erect and officer-like bearing; I put my cocked hat on fore and aft, with the gold rosette dangling between my two eyes, so that in looking at it, which I could not help doing, I must have squinted. And I held my nose high in the air, like a pig in a hurricane, fancying myself as much an object of admiration to them as I was to myself. We passed on opposite tacks, and our respective velocities had sepa-

rated us to the distance of twenty or thirty yards, when one of them called to me in a voice evidently cracked in His Majesty's service—"Hollo, young gentleman, come back here."

I concluded I was going to be complimented on the cut of my coat, to be asked the address of my tailor, and to hear the rakish sit of my hat admired. I now began to think I should hear a contention between the lords of the ocean, as to who should have me as a sample-middy on their quarter decks; and I was even framing an excuse to my father's friend for not joining his ship. Judge then of my surprise and mortification, when I was thus accosted in an angry and menacing tone by the oldest of the officers—

"Pray, Sir, what ship do you belong to?"

"Sir," said I, proud to be thus interrogated, "I belong to His Majesty's ship, the Le ——," (having a French name, I clapped on both the French and English articles, as being more impressive.)

"Oh, you do, do you?" said the veteran,

with an air of conscious superiority; "then you will be so good as to turn round, go down to Mutton Cove, take a boat, and have your person conveyed with all possible speed on board of His Majesty's ship, the Lee," (imitating me); "and tell the first lieutenant it is my order that you be not allowed any more leave while the ship is in port; and I shall tell your captain he must teach his officers better manners than to pass the port-admiral without touching their hats."

While this harangue was going on, I stood in a circle, of which I was the centre, and the admiral and captains formed the circumference: what little air there was, their bodies intercepted, so that I was not only in a stew, but stupified into the bargain.

"There, Sir, you hear me—you may go."

"Yes, I do hear you," thinks I; "but how the devil am I to get away from you?" for the cruel captains, like school boys round a rat-trap, stood so close that I could not start. Fortunately,

this my blockade, which they no doubt intended for their amusement, saved me for that time. I recollected myself, and said, with affected simplicity of manner, that I had that morning put on my uniform for the first time; that I had never seen my captain, and never was on board a ship in all my life. At this explanation, the countenance of the admiral relaxed into something that was meant for a smile, and the captains all burst into a loud laugh.

"Well, young man," said the admiral—who was really a good-tempered fellow, though an odd one—"well, young man, since you have never been at sea, it is some excuse for not knowing good manners; there is no necessity now for delivering my message to the first lieutenant, but you may go on board your ship."

Having seen me well-roasted, the captains opened right and left, and let me pass. As I left them I heard one say, "Just caught—marks of the dogs' teeth in his heels, I warrant you." I

did not stop to make any reply, but sneaked away, mortified and crest fallen, and certainly obeyed this the first order which I had ever received in the service, with more exactness than I ever did any subsequent one.

During the remainder of my walk, I touched my hat to every one I met. I conferred the honour of a salute on midshipmen, master's mates, serjeants of marines, and two corporals. Nor was I aware of my over complaisance, until a young woman, dressed like a lady, who knew more of the navy than I did, asked me if I had come down to stand for the borough? Without knowing what she meant, I replied, "No."

"I thought you might," said she, "seeing you are so d—d civil to every body."

Had it not been for this friendly hint, I really believe I should have touched my hat to a drummer.

Having gone through this ordeal, I reached the inn at Plymouth, where I found my captain, and presented my father's letter. He surveyed

me from top to toe, and desired the pleasure of my company to dinner at six o'clock. "In the mean time," he said, "as it is now only eleven, you may go a-board, and shew yourself to Mr. Handstone, the first lieutenant, who will cause your name to be entered on the books, and allow you to come back here to dine." I bowed and retired. And on my way to Mutton Cove, was saluted by the females, with the appellation of Royal Reefer (midshipman), and a Biscuit Nibbler; but all this I neither understood nor cared for.

I arrived safely at Mutton Cove, where two women, seeing my inquiring eye, and span-new dress, asked what ship they should take "my honour" to. I told them the ship I wished to go on board of.

"She *lays* under the Obelisk," said the elder woman, who appeared to be about forty years of age; "and we will take your honour off for a shilling."

I agreed to this, both for the novelty of the

thing, as well as on account of my natural gallantry and love of female society. The elder woman was mistress of her profession, handling her skull (oar) with great dexterity; but Sally, the younger one, who was her daughter, was still in her noviciate. She was pretty, cleanly dressed, had on white stockings, and sported a neat foot and ancle.

"Take care, Sally," said the mother; "keep stroke, or you will catch a crab."

"Never fear, mother," said the confident Sally; and at the same moment, as if the very caution against the accident was the cause of it, the blade of her skull did not dip into the water. The oar meeting no resistance, its loom, or handle, came back upon the bosom of the unlucky Sally, tipped her backwards—up went her heels in the air, and down fell her head into the bottom of the boat. As she was pulling the stroke oar, her feet almost came in contact with the rosette of my cocked-hat.

"There now, Sally," said the wary mother, "I told you how it would be—I knew you would catch a crab!"

Sally quickly recovered herself, blushed a little, and resumed her occupation.

"That's what we calls catching a crab in our country," said the woman. I replied that I thought it was a very pretty amusement; and I asked Sally to try and catch another: but she declined; and, by this time, we had reached the side of the ship.

Having paid my naiads, I took hold of the main-rope, as I was instructed by them, and mounted the side. Reaching the gangway, I was accosted by a midshipman in a round jacket and trowsers, a shirt none of the cleanest, and a black silk handkerchief tied loosely round his neck.

"Who did you want, Sir?" said he.

"I wish to speak with Mr. Handstone, the first lieutenant," said I. He informed me that the first lieutenant was then gone down to frank

the letters, and, when he came on deck, he would acquaint him with my being there.

After this dialogue, I was left on the larboard side of the quarter deck to my own meditations. The ship was at this time refitting, and was what is usually called in the hands of the dock-yard, and a sweet mess she was in. The quarter-deck carronades were run fore and aft; the slides unbolted from the side, the decks were covered with pitch fresh poured in the seams, and the caulkers were sitting on their boxes, ready to renew their noisy labours as soon as the dinner hour had expired. The middies, meanwhile, on the starboard side of the quarter-deck, were taking my altitude, and speculating as to whether I was to be a mess-mate of theirs, and what sort of a chap I might chance to be—both these points were solved very speedily.

The first lieutenant came on deck: the mid-shipman of the watch presented me, and I pre-sented my name and the captain's message.

"It is all right, Sir," said Mr. Handstone. "Here, Mr. Flyblock, do you take this young gentleman into your mess; you may shew him below as soon as you please, and tell him where to hang his hammock up."

I followed my new friend down the ladder, under the half deck, where sat a woman, selling bread and butter and red herrings to the sailors; she had also cherries and clotted cream, and a cask of strong beer, which seemed to be in great demand. We passed her, and descended another ladder, which brought us to the 'tween decks, and into the steerage, in the forepart of which, on the larboard side, a-breast of the main-mast, was my future residence—a small hole, which they called a berth; it was ten feet long by six, and about five feet four inches high; a small aperture, about nine inches square, admitted a very scanty portion of that which we most needed, namely, fresh air and daylight. A deal table occupied a very considerable extent of this small apartment, and

on it stood a brass candlestick, with a dip candle, and a wick like a full-blown carnation. The table-cloth was spread, and the stains of port wine and gravy too visibly indicated, like the midshipman's dirty shirt, the near approach of Sunday. The black servant was preparing for dinner, and I was shewn the seat I was to occupy. "Good Heaven!" thought I, as I squeezed myself between the ship's side and the mess-table, "and is this to be my future residence?—better go back to school; there, at least, there is fresh air and clean linen."

I would have written that moment to my dear broken-hearted mother, to tell her how gladly her prodigal son would fly back to her arms; but I was prevented doing this, first by pride, and secondly by want of writing materials. Taking my place, therefore, at the table, I mustered up all my philosophy; and, to amuse myself, called to mind the reflection of Gil Blas, when he found himself in the den of the robbers,

"behold then the worthy nephew of my uncle, Gil Perez, caught like a rat in a trap."

Most of my new associates were absent on duty; the 'tween-decks was crammed with casks and cases, and chests, and bags, and hammocks; the noise of the caulkers was resumed over my head and all around me; the stench of bilge water, combining with the smoke of tobacco, the effluvia of gin and beer, the frying of beef-steaks and onions, and red-herrings—the pressure of a dark atmosphere and a heavy shower of rain, all conspired to oppress my spirits, and render me the most miserable dog that ever lived. I had almost resigned myself to despair, when I recollected the captain's invitation, and mentioned it to Flyblock. "That's well thought of," said he, "Murphy also dines with him: you can both go together, and I dare say he will be very glad of your company."

A captain seldom waits for a midshipman, and we took good care he should not wait for

us. The dinner was in all respects one "on service." The captain said a great deal, the lieutenants very little, and the midshipmen nothing at all; but the performance of the knife and fork, and wine glass (as far as it could be got at), were exactly in the inverse ratio. The company consisted of my own captain, and two others, our first lieutenant, Murphy, and myself.

As soon as the cloth was removed, the captain filled me out a glass of wine, desired I would drink it, and then go and see how the wind was. I took this my first admonitory hint in its literal sense and meaning; but having a very imperfect idea of the points of the compass, I own I felt a little puzzled how I should obtain the necessary information. Fortunately for me, there was a weathercock on the old church steeple; it had four letters, which I certainly did know were meant to represent the cardinal points. One of these seemed so exactly to correspond with the dial above it, that I made up my mind

the wind must be West, and instantly returned to give my captain the desired information, not a little proud with my success in having obtained it so soon. But what was my surprise to find that I was not thanked for my trouble; the company even smiled and winked at each other; the first lieutenant nodded his head, and said, "Rather green yet." The captain, however, settled the point according to the manners and customs, in such cases, used at sea. "Here, youngster," said he, "here is another glass for you: drink that, and then Murphy will shew you what I mean." Murphy was my chaperon; he swallowed his wine—rather a *gorge déployée;* put down his glass very energetically, and, bowing, left the room.

When we had got fairly into the hall, we had the following duet:—"What the h— brought you back again, you d—d young green horn? Could not you take a hint, and be off, as the captain intended? So I must lose my wine for such a d—d young whelp as you. I'll pay

you off for this, my tight fellow, before we have been many weeks together."

I listened to this elegant harangue, with some impatience, and much more indignation. "I came back," said I, "to tell the captain how the wind was."

"You be d—d," replied Murphy; "do you think the captain did not know how the wind was? and if he had wanted to know, don't you think he would have sent a sailor like me, instead of such a d—d lubberly whelp as you?"

"As to what the captain meant," said I, "I do not know. I did as I was bid—but what do you mean by calling me a whelp? I am no more a whelp than yourself!"

"Oh, you are not, a'n't you?" said Murphy, seizing me by one of my ears, which he pulled so unmercifully that he altered the shape of it very considerably, making it something like the lee board of a Dutch Schuyt.

This was not to be borne; though, as I was but thirteen, he seventeen, and a very stout

fellow, I should rather not have sought an action with him. But he had began it: my honour was at stake, and I only wonder I had not drawn my dirk, and laid him dead at my feet. Fortunately for him, the rage I was in, made me forget I had it by my side; though I remembered my uniform, the disgrace brought upon it, and the admiration of the chamber-maid, as well as the salute of the sentinel, all which, formed a combustible in my brain. I went off like a flash, and darted my fist (the weapon I had been most accustomed to wield) into the left eye of my adversary, with a force and precision which Crib would have applauded. Murphy staggered back with the blow, and for a moment I flattered myself he had had enough of it.

But no—alas, this was a day of disappointments! he had only retreated to take a spring; he then came on me like the life-guards at Waterloo, and his charge was irresistible. I was upset, pummelled, thumped, kicked, and should probably

have been the subject of a coroner's inquest had not the waiter and chambermaid ran in to my rescue. The tongue of the latter was particularly active in my favour: unluckily for me, she had no other weapon near her, or it would have gone hard with Murphy. "Shame!" said she, "for such a great lubberly creature to beat such a poor, little, innocent, defenceless fellow as that. What would his mamma say to see him treated so?"

"D—n his mamma, and you too," said Pat, "look at my eye."

"D—n your eye," said the waiter; "it's a pity he had not served the other one the same way; no more than you deserve for striking a child; the boy is game, and that's more than you are; he is worth as many of you, as will stand between this and the iron chair at Barbican."

"I'd like to see him ducked in it," said the maid.

While this was going on, I had resumed my

defensive attitude. I had never once complained, and had gained the good will of all the bystanders, among whom now appeared my captain and his friends. The blood was streaming from my mouth, and I bore the marks of discipline from the superior prowess of my enemy, who was a noted pugilist for his age, and would not have received the hit from me, if he had supposed my presumption would have led me to attack him. The captain demanded an explanation. Murphy told the story in his own way, and gave any thing but the true version. I could have beaten him at that, but truth answered my purpose better than falsehood on this occasion; so, as soon as he had done, I gave my round unvarnished tale, and, although defeated in the field, I plainly saw that I had the advantage of him in the cabinet. Murphy was dismissed in disgrace, and ordered to rusticate on board till his eye was bright.

"I should have confined you to the ship my-

self," said the captain, "but the boy has done it for me; you cannot appear on shore with that black eye."

As soon as he was gone, I was admonished to be more careful in future. "You are," said the captain, "like a young bear; all your sorrows are before you; if you give a blow for every hard name you receive, your fate in the service may be foreseen: if weak, you will be pounded to a mummy—if strong, you will be hated. A quarrelsome disposition will make you enemies in every rank you may attain; you will be watched with a jealous eye, well knowing, as we all do, that the same spirit of insolence and overbearing which you shew in the cockpit, will follow you to the quarter-deck, and rise with you in the service. This advice is for your own good; not that I interfere in these things, as every body and every thing finds its level in a man-of-war; I only wish you to draw a line between resistance against oppression, which I admire and respect, and a litigious, uncompro-

mising disposition, which I despise. Now wash your face and go on board. Try by all means to conciliate the rest of your messmates, for first impressions are everything, and rely on it, Murphy's report will not be in your favour."

This advice was very good, but had the disadvantage of coming too late for that occasion by at least half an hour. The fracas was owing to the captain's mismanagement, and the manners and customs of the navy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The conversation at the tables of the higher ranks of the service in those days, unless ladies were present, was generally such as a boy could not listen to without injury to his better feelings. I was, therefore, "hinted off;" but with due respect to my captain, who is still living, I should have been sent on board of my ship, and cautioned against the bad habits of the natives of North Corner and Barbican; and if I could not be admitted to the mysterious conversation of a captain's table, I should have been told in a clear and decided

manner to depart, without the needless puzzle of an inuendo, which I did not and could not understand.

I returned on board about eight o'clock, where Murphy had gone before me, and prepared a reception far from agreeable. Instead of being welcomed to my berth, I was received with coldness, and I returned to the quarter-deck, where I walked till I was weary, and then leaned against a gun. From this temporary alleviation, I was roused by a voice of thunder, "Lean off that gun." I started up, touched my hat, and continued my solitary walk, looking now and then at the second-lieutenant, who had thus gruffly addressed me. I felt a dejection of spirits, a sense of destitution and misery, which I cannot describe. I had done no wrong, yet I was suffering as if I had committed a crime. I had been aggrieved, and had vindicated myself as well as I could. I thought I was among devils, and not men; my thoughts turned homeward. I remembered my poor mother in her

agony of grief, on the sofa; and my unfeeling heart then found that it needed the soothings of affection. I could have wept, but I knew not where to go; for I could not be seen to cry on board of ship. My pride began to be humbled. I felt the misery of dependence, although not wanting pecuniary resources; and would have given up all my prospects, to have been once more seated quietly at home.

The first-lieutenant came on board soon after, and I heard him relating my adventure to the second-lieutenant. The tide now evidently turned in my favour. I was invited down to the gun-room, and having given satisfactory answers to all the questions put to me, Flyblock was sent for, and I was once more placed under his protection. The patronage of the first-lieutenant, I flattered myself would have ensured me at least common civility for a short time.

I had now more leisure to contemplate my new residence and new associates, who having returned from the duty of the dock-yard, were all

assembled in the berth, seated round the table on the lockers, which paid "the double debt" of seats and receptacles; but in order to obtain a sitting, it was requisite either to climb over the backs of the company, or submit to "high pressure" from the last comer. Such close contact, even with our best friends, is never desirable; but in warm weather, in a close, confined air, with a manifest scarcity of clean linen, it became particularly inconvenient. The population here very far exceeded the limits usually allotted to human beings in any situation of life, except in a slave ship. The midshipmen, of whom there were eight full-grown, and four youngsters, were without either jackets or waistcoats; some of them had their shirt-sleeves rolled up, either to prevent the reception or to conceal the absorption of dirt in the region of the wristbands. The repast on the table consisted of a can or large black-jack of small beer, and a japan breadbasket full of sea biscuit. To compensate for this simple fare, and at the same

time to cool the close atmosphere of the berth, the table was covered with a large green cloth with a yellow border, and many yellow spots withal, where the colour had been discharged by slops of vinegar, hot tea, &c. &c.; a sack of potatoes stood in one corner, and the shelves all round, and close over our heads, were stuffed with plates, glasses, quadrants, knives and forks, loaves of sugar, dirty stockings and shirts, and still fouler table-cloths, small-tooth combs, and ditto large, clothes brushes and shoe brushes, cocked hats, dirks, German flutes, mahogany writing-desks, a plate of salt butter, and some two or three pair of naval half boots. A single candle served to make darkness visible, and the stench had nearly overpowered me.

The reception I met with tended in no way to relieve these horrible impressions. A black man, with no other dress than a dirty check shirt and trowsers, not smelling of amber, stood within the door ready to obey all and any one of the commands with which he was loaded.

The smell of the towel he held in his hand, to wipe the plates and glasses with, completed my discomfiture; and I fell sick upon the seat nearest to me. Recovering from this, without the aid of any "ministering angel," I contracted the pupils of my eyes, and ventured to look around me. The first who met my gaze, was my recent foe; he bore the marks of contention by having his eye bound up with brown paper and a dirty silk pocket handkerchief; the other was quickly turned on me; and with a savage and brutal countenance, he swore and denounced the severest vengeance on me for what I had done. In this, he was joined by another ill-looking fellow, with large whiskers.

I shall not repeat the elegant philippics with which I was greeted. Suffice it to say that I found all the big ones against me, and the little ones neuter; the caterer supposing I had received suitable admonition for my future guidance, and that I was completely bound over to keep the peace—turned all the youngsters out of the

berth: "As for you, Mr. Fistycuff," said he, addressing himself to me, "you may walk off with the rest of the gang, so make yourself scarce, like the Highlander's breeches."

The boys all obeyed the command in silence, and I was not sorry to follow them. As I went out he added, "So, Mr. Rumbusticus, you can obey orders, I see, and it is well for you; for I had a biscuit ready to shy at your head." This affront, after all I had suffered, I was forced to pocket; but I could not understand what the admiral could mean, when he said that people went to sea "to learn manners."

I soon made acquaintance with the younger set of my messmates, and we retreated to the forecastle as the only part of the ship suitable to the nature of the conversation we intended to hold. After one hour's deliberation, and notwithstanding it was the first night I had ever been on board a ship, I was unanimously elected leader of this little band. I became the William Tell of the party, as having been the first

to resist the tyranny of the oldsters, and especially of the tyrant Murphy. I was let into all the secrets of the mess in which the youngsters were placed by the captain to be instructed and kept in order. Alas! what instruction did we get but blasphemy? What order were we kept in, except that of paying our mess, and being forbidden to partake of those articles which our money had purchased? My blood boiled when they related all they had suffered, and I vowed I would sooner die than submit to such treatment.

The hour of bedtime arrived. I was instructed how to get into my hammock, and laughed at for tumbling out on the opposite side. I was forced to submit to this pride of conscious superiority of these urchins who could only boast of a few months more practical experience than myself, and who therefore called me a greenhorn. But all this was done in good nature; and after a few hearty laughs from my companions, I gained the centre of my suspended bed,

and was very soon in a sound sleep. This was only allowed to last till about four o'clock in the morning, when down came the head of my hammock, and I fell to the deck, with my feet still hanging in the air, like poor Sally, when she caught the crab. Stunned and stupified by the fall, bewildered by the violent concussion and the novelty of all around me, I continued in a state of somnambulism, and it was some minutes before I could recollect myself.

The marine sentinel at the gun-room door seeing what had happened, and also espying the person to whom I was indebted for this favour, very kindly came to my assistance. He knotted my lanyard, and restored my hammock to its place, but he could not persuade me to confide myself again to such treacherous bed-posts, for I thought the rope had broken; and so strongly did the fear of another tumble possess my mind, that I took a blanket, and lay down on a chest at some little distance, keeping a sleepless eye directed to the scene of my late disaster.

This was fortunate; for not many minutes had elapsed, when Murphy, who had been relieved from the middle watch, came below, and seeing my hammock again hanging up, and supposing me in it, took out his knife and cut it down. "So then," said I to myself, "it was you was it who invaded my slumbers, and nearly dashed my brains out, and have now made the second attempt." I vowed to Heaven that I would have revenge; and I acquitted myself of that vow. Like the North American savage, crouching lest he should see me, I waited patiently till he had got into his hammock, and was in a sound sleep. I then gently pushed a shot-case under the head of his hammock, and placed the corner of it so as to receive his head; for had it split his skull I should not have cared, so exasperated was I, and so bent on revenge. Subtle and silent I then cut his lanyard: he fell, and his head coming in contact with the edge of the shot-

case, he gave a deep groan, and there he lay. I instantly retreated to my chest and blanket, where I pretended to snore, while the sentinel, who, fortunately for me, had seen Murphy cut me down the first time, came with his lanthorn, and seeing him apparently dead, removed the shot-case out of the way, and then ran to the serjeant of marines, desiring him to bring the surgeon's assistant.

While the serjeant was gone, he whispered softly to me, "Lie still; I saw the whole of it, and if you are found out, it may go hard with you."

Murphy, it appeared, had few friends in the ship; all rejoiced at his accident. I laid very quietly in my blanket while the surgeon's assistant dressed the wound; and, after a considerable time, succeeded in restoring the patient to his senses: he was, however, confined a fortnight to his bed. I was either not suspected, or, if I was, it was known that I was not the aggressor.

The secret was well kept. I gave the marine a guinea, and took him into my service as *valet de place.*

And now, reader, in justice to myself, allow me to make a few remarks. They may serve as a palliative, to a certain degree, for that unprincipled career which the following pages will expose. The passions of pride and revenge, implanted in our fallen natures, and which, if not eradicated in the course of my education, ought, at least, to have lain dormant as long as possible, were, through the injudicious conduct of those to whom I had been entrusted, called into action and full activity at a very early age. The moral seeds sown by my parents, which might have germinated and produced fruit, were not watered or attended to: weeds had usurped their place, and were occupying the ground which should have supported them; and at this period, when the most assiduous cultivation was necessary to procure a return, into what a situation was I thrown? In a ship

crowded with three hundred men, each of them, or nearly so, cohabiting with an unfortunate female, in the lowest state of degradation; where oaths and blasphemy interlarded every sentence; where religion was wholly neglected, and the only honour paid to the Almighty was a clean shirt on a Sunday; where implicit obedience to the will of an officer, was considered of more importance than the observance of the Decalogue; and the commandments of God, were in a manner abrogated by the articles of war—for the first might be broken with impunity, and even with applause, while the most severe punishment awaited any infraction of the latter.

So much for the ship in the aggregate; let us now survey the midshipman's berth. Here we found the same language and the same manners, with scarcely one shade more of refinement. Their only pursuits, when on shore were intoxication and worse debauchery, to be gloried in and boasted of when they returned on board.

My captain said that every thing found its level in a man-of-war. True; but in a midshipman's berth it was the level of a savage, where corporeal strength was the *sine qua non*, and decided whether you were to act the part of a tyrant or a slave. The discipline of public schools, bad and demoralizing as it is, was light, compared to the tyranny of a midshipman's berth in 1803.

A mistaken notion has long prevailed, that boys derive advantages from suffering under the tyranny of their oppressors at school; and we constantly hear the praises of public schools and midshipmen's berths on this very account, namely, "that boys are taught to find their level." I do not mean to deny but that the higher orders improve by collision with their inferiors, and that a young aristocrat is often brought to his senses by receiving a sound threshing from the son of a tradesman. But he that is brought up a slave, will be a tyrant when he has the power; the worst of our passions are nourished to inflict the same evil on others which we boast of

having suffered ourselves. The courage and daring spirit of a noble-minded boy is rather broken down by ill-usage, which he has not the power to resist, or, surmounting all this, he proudly imbibes a dogged spirit of sullen resistance and implacable revenge, which become the bane of his future life.

The latter was my fate; and let not my readers be surprised or shocked, if, in the course of these adventures, I should display some of the fruits of that fatal seed, so early and so profusely sown in my bosom. If, on my first coming into the ship, I shrunk back with horror at the sound of blasphemy and obscenity—if I shut my eyes to the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, it was not so long. By insensible degrees, I became familiarized with vice, and callous to its approach. In a few months I had become nearly as corrupt as others. I might indeed have resisted longer; but though the fortress of virtue could have held out against open violence, it could not withstand the under-

mining of ridicule. My young companions, who, as I have observed, had only preceded me six months in the service, were already grown old in depravity; they laughed at my squeamishness, called me milksop and boarding-school miss, and soon made me as bad as themselves. We had not quite attained the age of perpetration, but we were fully prepared to meet it when it came.

I had not been two days on board, when the youngsters proposed a walk into the main top. I mounted the rigging with perfect confidence, for I was always a good climber; but I had not proceeded far, when I was overtaken by the captain of the top and another man, who, without any ceremony or preface, seized me by each arm, and very deliberately lashed me fast in the rigging. They laughed at my remonstrance. I asked what they meant, and the captain of the top said very civilly, taking off his hat at the same time, "that it was the way all gemmen were sarved when they first went aloft; and I

must pay my footing as a bit of a parkazite." I looked down to the quarter-deck for assistance, but every one there was laughing at me; and even the very little rogues of midshipmen who had enticed me up were enjoying the joke. Seeing this was the case, I only asked what was to pay. The captain of the top said a seven shilling bit would be thought handsome. This I promised to give, and was released on my own recognizances. When I reached the quarter-deck I paid the money.

Having experienced nothing but cruelty and oppression since I had been on board, I sorely repented of coming to sea; my only solace was seeing Murphy, as he lay in his hammock, with his head bound up. This was a balm to me. "I bide my time," said I; "I will yet be revenged on all of you;" and so I was. I let none escape; I had them all in their turns, and glutted my thirst for revenge.

I had been three weeks on board, when the ship was reported ready for sea. I had acquired

the favour of the first lieutenant by a constant attention to the little duties he gave me to perform. I had been put into a watch, and stationed in the fore-top, and quartered at the foremast guns on the main-deck. I was told by the youngsters that the first lieutenant was a harsh officer, and implacable when once he took a dislike; his manners, however, even when under the greatest excitement, were always those of a perfect gentleman, and I continued living on good terms with him. But with the second lieutenant I was not so fortunate. He had ordered me to take the jolly-boat and bring off a woman whom he kept; I remonstrated and refused, and from that moment we never were friends.

Murphy had also recovered from his fall, and returned to his duty; his malice towards me increased, and I had no peace or comfort in his presence. One day he threw a biscuit at my head, calling me at the same time a name which reflected on the legitimacy of my birth, in

language the most coarse and vulgar. In a moment all the admonitions which I had received, and all my sufferings for impetuosity of temper, were forgotten; the blood boiled in my veins and trickled from my wounded fore-head. Dizzy, and almost sightless with rage, I seized a brass candlestick, the bottom of which (to keep it steady at sea) was loaded with lead, and threw it at him with all my might; had it taken effect as I intended, that offence would have been his last. It missed his head, and struck the black servant on the shoulder; the poor man went howling to the surgeon, in whose care he remained for many days.

Murphy started up to take instant vengeance, but was held by the other seniors of the mess, who unanimously declared that such an offence as mine should be punished in a more solemn manner. A mock trial (without adverting to the provocation I had received) found me guilty of insubordination "to the oldsters," and setting a bad example to the youngsters. I

was sentenced to be *cobbed* with a worsted stocking, filled with wet sand. I was held down on my face on the mess-table by four stout midshipmen; the surgeon's assistant held my wrist, to ascertain if my pulse indicated exhaustion; while Murphy, at his own particular request, became the executioner. Had it been any other but him, I should have given vent to my agonizing pain by screams, but like a sullen Ebo, I was resolved to endure even to death, rather than gratify him by any expression of pain. After a most severe punishment, a cold sweat and faintness alarmed the surgeon's assistant. I was then released, but ordered to mess on my chest for a fortnight by myself. As soon as I was able to stand, and had recovered my breath, I declared in the most solemn manner, that a repetition of the offence should produce the action for which I had suffered, and I would then appeal to the captain for justice; "and," said I, turning to Murphy, "it was I who cut down your ham-

mock, and had very nearly knocked out your brains. I did it in return for your cowardly attack on me; and I will do it again, if I suffer martyrdom for it: for every act of tyranny you commit, I will have revenge. Try me now, and see if I am not as good as my word." He grinned, and turned pale, but dared do no more, for he was a coward.

I was ordered to quit the berth, which I did, and as I went out, one of the mates observed, that I was "a proper malignant devil, by G—."

This violent scene produced a sort of cessation from hostilities. Murphy knew that he might expect a decanter at his head or a knife in his side, if I was provoked; and that peace which I could not gain from his compassion, I obtained from his fears. The affair made a noise in the ship. With the officers in the gun-room I lost ground, because it was misrepresented. With the men I gained favour, because they hated Murphy. They saw the truth, and admired me for my determined resistance.

Sent to Coventry by the officers, I sought the society of the men. I learned rapidly the practical part of my duty, and profited by the uncouth criticism of these rough warriors on the defective seamanship of their superiors. A sort of compact was made between us: they promised that whenever they deserted, it should not be from my boat when on duty, and I promised to let them go and drink at public houses as long as I could spare them. In spite, however, of this mutual understanding, two of them violated their faith the night before we went to sea, and left the boat of which I had charge; and as I had disobeyed orders in letting them go to a public house, I was, on my return to the ship, dismissed from the quarter-deck, and ordered to do my duty in the fore-top.

CHAPTER III.

The might of England flush'd
  To anticipate the scene;
And her van the fleeter rush'd
  O'er the deadly space between.
"Hearts of oak!" our captains cried; when each gun
  From its adamantine lips
  Spread a death-shade round the ships,
  Like the hurricane eclipse
    Of the sun.

CAMPBELL.

CONSIDERING my youth and inexperience, and the trifling neglect of which I was accused, there are few, even of the most rigid disciplinarians, who will not admit that I was both unjustly and unkindly treated by the first lieutenant, who certainly, with all my respect for him, had lent himself to my enemies. The second lieutenant and Mr. Murphy did not even conceal their feelings on the occasion, but exulted over my disgrace.

The ship was suddenly ordered to Portsmouth, where the captain, who had been on leave, was expected to join us, which he did soon after our arrival, when the first lieutenant made his reports of good and bad conduct during his absence. I had been about ten days doing duty in the fore-top, and it was the intention of Mr. Handstone, to which the captain seemed not disinclined, to have given me a flogging at the gun, as a gratuity for losing the men. This part of the sentence, however, was not executed. I continued a member of the midshipmen's mess, but was not allowed to enter the berth: my meals were sent to me, and I took them solus on my chest. The youngsters spoke to me, but only by stealth, being afraid of the oldsters, who had sent me to the most rigid Coventry.

My situation in the fore-top was nearly nominal. I went aloft when the hands were called, or in my watch, and amused myself with a book until we went below, unless there was any little duty for me to do, which did not appear above

my strength. The men doated on me as a martyr in their cause, and delighted in giving me every instruction in the art of knotting and splicing, rigging, reefing, furling, &c. &c.; and I honestly own that the happiest hours I had passed in that ship were during my seclusion among these honest tars.

Whether my enemies discovered this or not, I cannot say; but shortly after our arrival I was sent for by the captain into his own cabin, where I received a lecture on my misconduct, both as to my supposed irritable and quarrelsome disposition, and also for losing the men out of the boat. "In other respects," he added, "your punishment would have been much more severe but for your general good conduct; and I have no doubt, from this little well-timed severity, that you will in future conduct yourself with more propriety. I therefore release you from the disgraceful situation in which you are placed, and allow you to return to your duty on the quarter-deck."

The tears which no brutality or ill-treatment could wring from me, now flowed in abundance, and it was some minutes before I could recover myself sufficiently to thank him for his kindness, and to explain the cause of my disgrace. I told him, that since I had joined the ship I had been treated like a dog; that he alone had been ignorant of it, and that he alone had behaved to me with humanity. I then related all my sufferings, from the moment of that fatal glass of wine up to the time I was speaking. I did not conceal the act of cutting down Murphy's hammock, nor of throwing the candlestick at his head. I assured him I never gave any provocation; that I never struck without being first stricken. I said, moreover, that I would never receive a blow or be called an improper name, without resenting it, as far as I was able. It was my nature, and if killed, I could not help it. Several men have run away," said I, "since I came into the ship and before, and the officers under whose charge they were, only received a repri-

mand, while I, who have just come to sea, have been treated with the greatest and most degrading severity."

The captain listened to my defence with attention, and I thought seemed very much struck with it. I afterwards learned that Mr. Handstone had received a reprimand for his harsh treatment of me; he observed, that I should one day turn out a shining character, or go to the devil.

It appeared pretty evident to me, that however I might have roused the pride and resentment of the senior members of the mess by my resistance to arbitrary power, that I had gained some powerful friends, among whom was the captain. Many of the officers admired that dogged, "don't-care" spirit of resistance which I so perseveringly displayed, and were forced to admit that I had right on my side. I soon perceived the change of mind by the frequency of invitations to the cabin and gun-room tables. The youngsters were proud to

receive me again openly as their associate; but the oldsters regarded me with a jealousy and suspicion like that of an unpopular government to a favourite radical leader.

I soon arranged with the boys of my own age a plan of resistance, or rather of self-defence, which proved of great importance in our future warfare. One or two of them had nerve enough to follow it up; the others made fair promises, but fell off in the hour of trial. My code consisted of only two maxims: the first was, always to throw a bottle, decanter, candlestick, knife, or fork, at the head of any person who should strike one of us, if the assailant should appear too strong to encounter in fair fight. The second was, never to allow ourselves to be unjustly defrauded of our rights; to have an equal share of what we paid equally for; and to gain by artifice that which was withheld by force.

I explained to them that by the first plan we should insure civility, at least; for as tyrants are generally cowards, they would be afraid to

provoke that anger which in some unlucky moment might be fatal to them, or maim them for life. By the second, I promised to procure them an equal share in the good things of this life, the greater part of which the oldsters engrossed to themselves: in this latter we were much more unanimous than the former, as it incurred less personal risk. I was the projector of all the schemes for forage, and was generally successful.

At length we sailed to join the fleet off Cadiz, under the command of Lord Nelson. I shall not pretend to describe the passage down Channel and across the Bay of Biscay. I was as sea-sick as a lady in a Dover packet, until inured to the motion of the ship by the merciless calls to my duties aloft, or to relieve the deck in my watch.

We reached our station and joined the immortal Nelson but a few hours before that battle in which he lost his life and saved his country. The history of that important day has been so

often and so circumstantially related, that I cannot add much more to the stock on hand. I am only astonished, seeing the confusion and *invariable variableness* of a sea-fight, how so much could be known. One observation occurred to me then, and I have thought of it ever since with redoubled conviction; this was, that the admiral, after the battle began, was no admiral at all: he could neither see nor be seen; he could take no advantage of the enemy's weak points or defend his own; his ship, the Victory, one of our finest three-deckers, was, in a manner, tied up along-side a French eighty-gun ship.

These observations I have read in some naval work, and in my mind they receive ample confirmation. I could not help feeling an agony of anxiety (young as I was) for my country's glory, when I saw the noble leaders of our two lines exposed to the united fire of so many ships. I thought Nelson was too much exposed, and

think so now. Experience has confirmed what youthful fancy suggested; the enemy's centre should have been *Macadamised* by our seven three-deckers, some of which, by being placed in the rear, had little share in the action; and but for the intimidation which their presence afforded, might as well have been at Spithead. I mean no reflection on the officers who had charge of them: accidental concurrence of light wind and station in the line, threw them at such a distance from the enemy as kept them in the back ground the greater part of the day.

Others, again, were in enviable situations, but did not, as far as I could learn from the officers, do quite as much as they might have done. This defect on our part being met by equal disadvantages, arising from nearly similar causes on that of the enemy, a clear victory remained to us. The aggregate of the British navy is brave and good; and we must admit

that in this day, "when England expected every man to do his duty," there were but few who disappointed their country's hopes.

When the immortal signal was communicated, I shall never, no, never, forget the electric effect it produced through the fleet. I can compare it to nothing so justly as to a match laid to a long train of gunpowder; and as Englishmen are the same, the same feeling, the same enthusiasm, was displayed in every ship; tears ran down the cheeks of many a noble fellow when the affecting sentence was made known. It recalled every past enjoyment, and filled the mind with fond anticipations, which, with many, were never, alas! to be realized. They went down to their guns without confusion; and a cool, deliberate courage from that moment seemed to rest on the countenance of every man I saw.

My captain, though not in the line, was no niggard in the matter of shot, and though he had no real business to come within range until called by signal, still he thought it his duty to

be as near to our ships engaged as possible, in order to afford them assistance when required. I was stationed at the foremost guns on the main deck, and the ship cleared for action; and though on a comparatively small scale, I cannot imagine a more solemn, grand, or impressive sight, than a ship prepared as ours was on that occasion. Her noble tier of guns, in a line gently curving out towards the centre; the tackle laid across the deck; the shot and wads prepared in ample store (round grape and canister); the powder boys each with his box full, seated on it, with perfect apparent indifference as to the approaching conflict. The captains of guns, with their priming boxes buckled round their waists; the locks fixed upon the guns; the lanyards laid around them; the officers, with their swords drawn, standing by their respective divisions.

The quarter-deck was commanded by the captain in person, assisted by the first lieutenant, the lieutenant of marines, a party of small-

arm men, with the mate and midshipmen, and a portion of seamen to attend the braces and fight the quarter-deck guns. The boatswain was on the forecastle; the gunner in the magazine, to send up a supply of powder to the guns; the carpenter watched and reported, from time to time, the depth of water in the well; he also walked round the wings or vacant spaces between the ship's side and the cables, and other stores. He was attended by his mates, who were provided with shot-plugs, oakum, and tallow, to stop any shot holes which might be made.

The surgeon was in the cock-pit with his assistants. The knives, saws, tourniquets, sponges, basins, wine and water, were all displayed and ready for the first unlucky patient that might be presented. This was more awful to me than any thing I had seen. "How soon," thought I, "may I be stretched, mangled and bleeding, on this table, and have occasion for all the skill and all the instruments I now

see before me!" I turned away, and endeavoured to forget it all.

As soon as the fleet bore up to engage the enemy, we did the same, keeping as near as we could to the admiral, whose signals we were ordered to repeat. I was particularly astonished with the skilful manner in which this was done. It was wonderful to see how instantaneously the same flags were displayed at our mast-heads as had been hoisted by the admiral; and the more wonderful this appeared to me, since his flags were rolled up in round balls, which were not broke loose until they had reached the mast-head, so that the signal officers of a repeater had to make out the number of the flag during its passage aloft in disguise. This was done by the power of good telescopes, and from habit, and sometimes by anticipation of the signal that would be next made.

The reader may perhaps not be aware that among civilized nations, in naval warfare, ships in the line never fire at frigates, unless they

provoke hostility by interposing between belligerent ships, or firing into them, as was the case in the Nile, when Sir James Saumarez, in the Orion, was under the necessity of sinking the Artemise, which he did with one broadside, as a reward for her temerity. Under this *pax-in-bellum* sort of compact, we might have come off scot-free, had we not partaken very liberally of the shot intended for larger ships, which did serious damage among our people.

The two British lines running down parallel to each other, and nearly perpendicular to the crescent line of the combined fleets, was the grandest sight that was ever witnessed. As soon as our van was within gun-shot of the enemy, they opened their fire on the Royal Sovereign and the Victory; but when the first-named of these noble ships rounded to, under the stern of the Santa Anna, and the Victory had very soon after laid herself on board the Redoutable, the clouds of smoke enveloped both fleets, and little was to be seen except the

falling of masts, and here and there, as the smoke blew away, a ship totally dismasted.

One of these proved to be English, and our captain seeing her between two of the enemy, bore up to take her in tow: at the same time, one of our ships of the line opened a heavy fire on one of the French line of battle ships, unluckily situated in a right line between us, so that the shot which missed the enemy sometimes came on board of us. I was looking out of the bow-port at the moment that a shot struck our ship on the stern between wind and water. It was the first time I had ever seen the effect of a heavy shot; it made a great splash, and, to me, as I then thought, a very unusual noise, throwing a great deal of water in my face. I very naturally started back, as I believe many a brave fellow has done. Two of the seamen quartered at my guns, laughed at me. I felt ashamed, and resolved to shew no more such weakness.

This shot was very soon succeeded by some others not quite so harmless: one came into the

bow port, and killed the two men who had witnessed my trepidation. My pride having been hurt that these men should have seen me flinch, I will own that I was secretly pleased when I saw them removed beyond the reach of human interrogation.

It would be difficult to describe my feelings on this occasion. Not six weeks before, I was the robber of hen-roosts and gardens—the hero of a horse-pond, ducking an usher—now suddenly, and almost without any previous warning or reflection, placed in the midst of carnage, and an actor in one of those grand events by which the fate of the civilized world was to be decided.

A quickened circulation of blood, a fear of immediate death, and a still greater fear of shame, forced me to an involuntary and frequent change of position; and it required some time, and the best powers of intellect, to reason myself into that frame of mind in which I could feel as safe and as unconcerned as if

we had been in harbour. To this state I at last did attain, and soon felt ashamed of the perturbation under which I laboured before the firing began. I prayed, it is true; but my prayer was not that of faith, of trust, or of hope—I prayed only for safety from imminent personal danger; and my orisons consisted of one or two short, pious ejaculations, without a thought of repentance for the past or amendment for the future.

But when we had once got fairly into action, I felt no more of this, and beheld a poor creature cut in two by a shot with the same indifference that at any other time I should have seen a butcher kill an ox. Whether my heart was bad or not, I cannot say; but I certainly felt my curiosity was gratified more than my feelings were shocked, when a raking-shot killed seven and wounded three more. I was sorry for the men, and, for the world, would not have injured them; but I had a philosophic turn of

mind; I liked to judge of causes and effects; and I was secretly pleased at seeing the effect of a raking-shot.

Towards four P. M. the firing began to abate, the smoke cleared away, and the calm sea became ruffled with an increasing breeze. The two hostile fleets were quiet spectators of each other's disasters. We retained possession of nineteen or twenty sail of the line. Some of the enemy's ships were seen running away into Cadiz; while four others passed to-windward of our fleet, and made their escape. A boat going from our ship to one near us, I jumped into her, and learned the death of Lord Nelson, which I communicated to the captain, who, after paying a tribute to the memory of that great man, looked at me with much complacency. I was the only youngster that had been particularly active, and he immediately despatched me with a message to a ship at a short distance. The first-lieutenant asked if he should not send an officer of more experience.

"No," said the captain; "he shall go: the boy knows very well what he is about!"—and away I went, not a little proud at the confidence placed in me.

Farther details of this eventful day are to be found recorded in our national histories; it will, therefore, be needless to repeat them here. When I met my messmates at supper in the berth, I was sorry to see Murphy among them. I had flattered myself that some fortunate shot would have for ever divested me of any further care on his account; but his time was not come.

"The devil has had a fine haul to-day!" said an old master's mate, as he took off his glass of grog.

"Pity you, and some others I could name, had not been in the net!" thinks I to myself.

"I hope plenty of the lieutenants are bowled out!" said another: "we shall stand some chance then of a little promotion!"

When the hands were turned up to muster, the number of killed amounted to nine, and the wounded to thirteen. When this was made known, there seemed to be a general smile of congratulation at the number fallen, rather than of regret for their loss. The vanity of the officers seemed tickled at the disproportionate slaughter in a frigate of our size, as compared to what they had heard the ships of the line had suffered.

I attended the surgeon in the steerage, to which place the wounded were removed, and saw all the amputations performed, without flinching; while men who had behaved well in the action fainted at the sight. I am afraid I almost took a pleasure in observing the operations of the surgeon, without once reflecting on the pain suffered by the patient. Habit had now begun to corrupt my mind. I was not cruel by nature; I loved the deep investigation of hidden things; and this day's action

gave me a very clear insight to the anatomy of the human frame, which I had seen cut in two by shot, lacerated by splinters, carved out with knives, and separated with saws!

Soon after the action, we were ordered to Spithead, with duplicate despatches. One morning I heard a midshipman say, "he would do his old father out of a new kit." I inquired what that meant, was first called a green-horn for not knowing, and then had it explained to me. "Don't you know," said my instructor, "that after every action there is more canvas, rope, and paint, expended in the warrant-officer's accounts, than were destroyed by the enemy?"

I assented to this on the credit of the informer, without knowing whether it was true or false, and he proceeded.

"How are we to have white hammock-cloths, skysail masts, and all our finery, besides a coat of paint for the ship's sides every six weeks, if we don't expend all these things in

action, and pretend they were lost overboard, or destroyed? The list of defects are given in to the admiral, he signs the demand, and the old commissioner must come down with the stores, whether he will or not. I was once in a sloop of war, when a large forty-four-gun frigate ran on board of us, carried away her jib-boom, and left her large fine weather-jib hanging on our fore-yard. It was made of beautiful Russia duck, and, to be sure, didn't we make a gang of white hammock-cloths fore and aft, besides white trowsers for the men? Well now, you must know, that as we make *uncle George* suffer for the stores, so I mean to make dad suffer for my traps. I mean to lose my chest overboard, with all my 'kit,' and return home to him and the old woman just fit for the fashion."

"And do you really mean to deceive your father and mother in that way?" replied I, with much apparent innocence.

"Do I? to be sure I do, you flat. How am I to keep up my stock, if I don't make the proper use of an action like this that we have been in?"

I took the hint: it never once occurred to me, that if I had fairly and candidly stated to my parents that my stock of clothes were insufficient for my appearance as a gentleman on the quarter-deck, that they would cheerfully have increased it to any reasonable extent. But I had been taught artifice and cunning; I could tell the truth where I thought it served my purpose, as well as a lie; but here I thought deception was a proof at once of spirit and of merit; and I resolved to practise it, if only to raise myself a trifling degree in the estimation of my unworthy associates. I had become partial to deception from habit, and preferred exercising my own ingenuity in outwitting my father, to obtaining what I needed by more straight-forward and honourable measures.

The ship needed some repairs, and by the indulgence of the captain, who was pleased with my conduct, I, who required so much instruction in the nature and cause of her defects, was allowed to be absent while they were made good. By this oversight, I lost all that improvement which I should have gained by close attention to the unrigging or shipping of the ship; the manner of returning her stores; taking out her masts and ballast, and seeing her taken into dock; the shape of her bottom, and the good or bad qualities which might be supposed to accelerate or retard her movement. All this was sacrificed to the impatience of seeing my parents; to the vain-glory of boasting of the action in which I had been present; and, perhaps, of being encouraged to tell lies of things which I never saw, and to talk of feats which I never performed. I loved effect; and I timed the moment of my return to my father's house (through a correspondence with my sister) to be just as a large party had sat down to a

sumptuous dinner. I had only been absent three months, it is true; but it was my first cruize, and then "I had seen so much, and been in such very interesting situations."

CHAPTER IV.

'Twill be time to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausive invention that carries it. I find my tongue is too fool-hardy.

SHAKSPEARE.

REACHING the well-known mansion of my father, I knocked softly at the front door, was admitted, and, without saying a word to the servant, rushed to the head of the dining-room table, and threw my arms round my mother's neck, who only screamed, "Good Heavens, my child!" and fell into hysterics. My father, who was in the very midst of helping his soup, jumped up to embrace me and assist my mother. The company all rose, like a covey of

partridges: one lady spoiled a new pink satin gown by a tip of the elbow from her next neighbour, just as a spoonful of soup had reached "the rosy portals of her mouth;" the little spaniel, Carlo, sat up a loud and incessant bark; and in one minute the whole comely arrangement of the feast was converted into anarchy and confusion.

Order was, however, soon restored: my mother recovered her composure—my father shook me by the hand—the company all agreed that I was a very fine, interesting boy—the ladies resumed their seats, and I had the satisfaction to observe that my sudden appearance had not deprived them of their appetites. I soon convinced them that in this particular, at least, I also was in high training. My midshipman's life had neither disqualified nor disgusted me with the luxuries of the table; nor did I manifest the slightest backwardness or diffidence when invited by the gentlemen to take wine. I answered every question with such fluency of

speech, and such compound interest of words, as sometimes caused the propounder to regret that he had put me to the trouble of speaking.

I gave a very florid description of the fight; praised some admirals and captains for their bravery, sneered at others, and accused a few of right-down misconduct. Now and then, by way of carrying conviction into my auditors' very souls, I rammed home my charges with an oath, at which my father looked grave, my mother held up her finger, the gentlemen laughed, and the ladies all said, with a smile, "Sweet boy!—what animation!—what sense!—what discernment!" Thinks I to myself, "You are as complete a set of gulls as ever picked up a bit of biscuit!"

Next morning, while my recent arrival was still warm, I broke the subject of my chest to my father and mother at breakfast; indeed, my father, very fortunately for me, began it by inquiring how my stock of clothes held out?

"Bad enough," said I, as I demolished the

third egg, for I still had a good appetite at breakfast.

"Bad enough!" repeated my father, "why you were extremely well fitted with every thing."

"Very true, Sir," said I; "but then you don't know what a man-of-war is in clearing for action; every thing not too hot or too heavy is chucked overboard with as little ceremony as I swallow this muffin. 'Whose hat-box is this?' 'Mr. Spratt's, Sir.' 'D—n Mr. Spratt, I'll teach him to keep his hat-box safe another time; over with it'—and away it went over the lee gang-way. Spratt's father was a hatter in Bond-street, so we all laughed."

"And pray, Frank," said my mother, "did your box go in the same way?"

"It kept company, I assure you. I watched them go astern, with tears in my eyes, thinking how angry you would be."

"Well, but the chest, Frank, what became of the chest? You said that the Vandals had

some respect for heavy objects; and yours, I am sure, to my cost, had very considerable specific gravity."

"That's very true, Sir; but you have no notion how much it was lightened the first day the ship got to sea. I was lying on it as sick as a whale—the first lieutenant and mate of the lower deck came down to see that the men's berths were clean; I, and my Noah's ark, lay slap in the way—'Who have we here?' said Mr. Handstone. 'Only Mr. Mildmay, and his chest, Sir,' said the serjeant of marines, into whose territory I acknowledge I had made very considerable encroachments. 'Only!' repeated the lieutenant, 'I thought it had been one of the big stones for the new bridge, and the owner of it a drunken Irish hodsman.' I was too sick to care much about what they said."

"You forget your breakfast," said my sister.

"I'll thank you for another muffin, and another cup of coffee," said I.

"Poor fellow!" said my mother, "what he must have suffered!"

"Oh! I have not told you half yet, my dear mother; I only wonder I am alive."

"Alive, indeed!" said my aunt Julia; "here, my dear, here is a small trifle to help you to replenish the stock you have lost in the service of your country. Noble little fellow! what should we do without sailors?"

I pocketed the little donation—it was a ten-pounder; finished my breakfast, by adding a slice of ham and half a french roll to the articles already shipped, and then continued my story.

"The first thing Mr. Handstone said, was, that my chest was too big; and the next thing he said, was, 'tell the carpenter I want him. Here, Mr. Adze, take this chest; reduce it one foot in length, and one in height.' 'Ay, ay, Sir,' said Adze; 'come, young gentleman, move off, and give me your key.' Sick as I was, I knew remonstrance or prayer were alike

useless, so I crawled off and presented my key to the carpenter, who very deliberately unlocked, and as expeditiously unloaded, all my treasure. The midshipmen all gathered round. The jars of preserves, and the cakes of gingerbread which you, my dearest mother, had so nicely packed up for me, were seized with greediness, and devoured before my face. One of them thrust his filthy paw into a pot of black currant jelly, which you gave me for a sore throat, and held a handful of it to my mouth, knowing at the same time that I was ready to be sea-sick in his hand."

"I shall never bear the sight of jelly again," said my sister.

"The nasty brutes!" said my aunt.

"Well," I resumed, "all my nice things went; and, sick as I was, I wished them gone; but when they laughed and spoke disrespectfully of you, my dear mother, I was ready to fly up and tear their eyes out."

"Never mind, my dear boy," said my mother, "we will make all right again."

"So I suppose we must," said my father; "but no more jelly and gingerbread, if you please, my dear. Proceed with your story, Frank."

"Well, Sir, in half an hour my chest was ready for me again; but while they were about it, they might have taken off another foot, for I found ample space to stow what the plunderers had left. The preserve-jars, being all empty, were given of course to the marines; and some other heavy articles being handed away, I was no longer puzzled how to stow them. After this, you know, Sir, we had the action, and then chest and bedding and all went to the ——."

"Do they throw all the chests and bedding overboard on these occasions?" said my father, with a cool and steady gaze in my face, which I had some trouble in facing back again.

"Yes; always every thing that is in the way,

and my chest was in the way, and away it went. You know, Sir, I could not knock down the first lieutenant; they would have hanged me at the yard-arm."

"Thank Heaven you did not, my love," said my mother; "what *has* happened can be repaired, but *that* could never have been got over. And your books, what is become of them?"

"All went in the lump. They are somewhere near the entrance of the Gut of Gibraltar—all lost, except my Bible; I saved that, as I happened to be reading it in my berth the night before the action."

"Excellent boy!" exclaimed my mother and aunt both together; "I am sure he speaks the truth."

"I hope he does," said my father, drily; "though it must be owned that these sea-fights, however glorious for Old England, are very expensive amusements to the parents of young

midshipmen, unless the boys happen to be knocked on the head."

Whether my father began to smell a rat, or whether he was afraid of putting more questions, for fear of hearing more fibs, I know not, but I was not sorry when the narrative was concluded, and I dismissed with flying colours.

To my shame be it spoken, the Bible that had assisted me so much in my mother's opinion, had never but once been opened since I had left home, and that was to examine if there were any bank-notes between the leaves, having heard of such things being done, merely to try whether young gentlemen did "search the Scriptures."

My demands were all made good. I believe with the greater celerity, as I began to grow very tiresome; my *sea* manners were not congenial to the drawing-room. My mother, aunt, and sister, were very different from the females I had been in the habit of seeing on board the

frigate. My oaths and treatment of the servants, male and female, all conspired to reconcile the whole family to my departure. They therefore heard with pleasure that my leave was expired; and, having obtained all I wanted, I did not care one pin how soon I got clear of them; so when the coach came to the door, I jumped in, drove to the Golden Cross, and the next morning rejoined my ship.

I was received with cheerfulness and cordiality by most of my shipmates, except Murphy and some of his cronies; nor did one feeling of regret or compunction enter my mind for the lies and hypocrisy with which I had deceived and cheated my parents. The reader will probably be aware that except the circumstance of reducing the size of my chest, and the seizure and confiscation of my jars and gingerbread, there was scarcely a vestige of truth in my story. That I had lost most of my things was most true; but they were lost by my own carelessness, and not by being

thrown overboard. After losing the key of my chest, which happened the day I joined, a rapid decrease of my stock convinced the first lieutenant that a much smaller package might be made of the remainder, and this was the sole cause of my chest being converted into a razée.

My fresh stock of clothes I brought down in a trunk, which I found very handy, and contrived to keep in better order than I had formerly done. The money given me to procure more bedding, I pocketed: indeed, I began to grow cunning. I perceived that the best-dressed midshipmen had always the most pleasant duties to perform. I was sent to bring off parties of ladies who came to visit the ship and to dine with the captain and officers. I had a tolerably good address, and was reckoned a very handsome boy; and though stout of my age, the ladies admitted me to great freedom, under pretence of my being still a dear little darling of a middy, and so perfectly innocent in my

mind and manners. The fact is, I was kept in much better order on board my ship than I was in my father's house—so much for the habit of discipline; but this was all outside show. My father was a man of talent, and knew the world, but he knew nothing of the navy; and when I had got him out of his depth, I served him as I did the usher: that is, I soused him and his company head over heels in the horse-pond of their own ignorance. Such is the power of local knowledge and cunning over abstruse science and experience.

So much assurance had I acquired by my recent success in town, that my self-confidence was increased to an incredible degree. My apparent candour, impudence, and readiness gave a currency to the coinings of my brain which far surpassed the dull matter-of-fact of my unwary cotemporaries.

Of my boyish days, I have now almost said enough. The adventures of a midshipman, during the three first years of his probationary

life, might, if fully detailed, disgust more than amuse, and corrupt more than they would improve: I therefore pass on to the age of sixteen, when my person assumed an outline of which I had great reason to be proud, since I often heard it the subject of encomium among the fair sex, and their award was confirmed even by my companions.

My mind kept pace with my person in every acquirement save those of morality and religion. In these, alas! I became daily more and more deficient, and, for a time, lost sight of them altogether. The manly, athletic frame, and noble countenance, with which I was blessed, served to render me only more like a painted sepulchre—all was foul within. Like a beautiful snake, whose poison is concealed under the gold and azure of its scales, my inward man was made up of pride, revenge, deceit, and selfishness, and my best talents were generally applied to the worst purposes.

In the knowledge of my profession I made

rapid progress, because I delighted in it, and because my mind, active and elastic as my body, required and fed on scientific research. I soon became an expert navigator and a good practical seaman, and all this I acquired by my own application. We had no schoolmaster; and while the other youngsters learned how to work a common day's work from the instruction of the older midshipmen, I, who was no favourite with the latter, was rejected from their coteries. I determined, therefore, to supply the deficiency myself, and this I was enabled to do by the help of a good education. I had been well grounded in mathematics, and was far advanced in Euclid and algebra, previous to leaving school: thus I had a vast superiority over my companions.

The great difficulty was to renew my application to study, after many months of idleness. This, however, I accomplished, and after having been one year at sea, kept a good reckoning and sent in my day's work to the captain. The

want of instruction which I first felt in the study of navigation, proved in the end of great service to me: I was forced to study more intensely, and to comprehend the principles on which I founded my theory, so that I was prepared to prove by mathematical demonstration, what others could only assert who worked by "inspection."

The pride of surpassing my seniors, and the hope of exposing their ignorance, stimulated me to inquiry, and roused me to application. The books which I had reported lost to my father, were handed out from the bottom of my chest, and read with avidity; many others I borrowed from the officers, whom, I must do the justice to say, not only lent them with cheerfulness, but offered me the use of their cabin to study in.

Thus I acquired a taste for reading. I renewed my acquaintance with the classic authors. Horace and Virgil, licentious, but alluring, drove me back to the study of Latin, and fixed in my mind a knowledge of the dead languages, at the

expence of my morals. Whether the exchange were profitable or not, is left to wiser heads than mine to decide; my business is with facts only.

Thus while the ungenerous malice of the elder midshipmen thought to have injured me by leaving me in ignorance, they did me the greatest possible service, by throwing me on my own resources. I continued on pretty nearly the same terms with my shipmates to the last. With some of the mess-room officers, I was still in disgrace, and was always disliked by the oldsters in my own mess; with the younger midshipmen and the foremast men I was a favourite. I was too proud to be a tyrant, and the same feeling prevented my submitting to tyranny. As I increased in strength and stature, I showed more determined resistance to arbitrary power: an occasional turn-up with boys of my own size, (for the best friends will quarrel,) and the supernumerary midshipmen sent on board for a passage, generally ended in establishing my

dominion or insuring for me a peaceable neutrality.

I became a scientific pugilist, and now and then took a brush with an oldster; and although overpowered, yet I displayed so much prowess, that my enemies became cautious how they renewed a struggle, which they perceived became daily more arduous; till, at last, like the lion's whelp, my play ceased to be a joke, and I was left to enjoy that tranquillity, which few found it safe or convenient to disturb. By degrees the balance of power was fairly established, and even Murphy was awed into civil silence.

In addition to my well-known increase in personal strength, I acquired a still greater superiority over my companions by the advantage of education; and this I took great care to make them feel on every occasion. I was appealed to in all cases of literary disputation, and was, by general consent, the umpire of the

steerage. I was termed "good company,"—not always to the advantage of the possessor of such a talent; for it often tends, as it did with me, to lead into very bad company. I had a fine voice, and played on one or two instruments. This frequently procured me invitations to the gun-room, and excuses from duty, together with more wine or grog than was of service to me, and conversation that I had better not have heard.

We were ordered on a cruise to the coast of France; and as the junior port-admiral had a spite against our captain, he swore by —— that go we should, ready or not ready. Our signal was made to weigh, while lighters of provisions, and the powder-hoy with our powder, were lying alongside—the quarter-deck guns all adrift, and not even mounted. Gun after gun, from the Royal William, was repeated by the Gladiator, the flag-ship of the harbour-admiral, and with our signal to part company.

The captain, not knowing how the story

might travel up by telegraph to London, and conscious, perhaps, that he had left a little too much to the first-lieutenant, "tore the ship away by the hair of the head"—unmoored, bundled every thing in upon deck out of the lighters—turned all the women out of the ship, except five or six of the most abandoned—and, with a strong northerly wind, ran down to Yarmouth-roads, and through the Needles to sea, in a state of confusion and disaster which I hope never to see again.

The rear-admiral, Sir Hurricane Humbug, stood on the platform looking at us, (I was was afterwards told,) and was heard to exclaim, "D—n his eyes," (meaning our captain,) "there he goes at last! I was afraid that that fellow would have grounded on his beef bones before we should have got him out!"

"The more haste, the less speed," is oftener true in naval affairs than in any other situation of life. With us it had nearly proved fatal to the ship. Had we met with an enemy, we must

either have disgraced the flag by running away, or been taken.

No sooner clear of the Needles, than night came on, and with it a heavy gale of wind at north-north-west. The officers and men were at work till four in the morning, securing the boats, booms, and anchors, clearing the decks of provisions, and setting up the lower rigging, which by the labour of the ship had begun to stretch to an alarming degree; by great exertion this was accomplished, and the guns secured before the gale had increased to a hurricane.

About nine the next morning, a poor marine, a recruit from Portsmouth, unfortunately fell overboard; and though many brave fellows instantly jumped into one of the quarter-boats, and begged to be lowered down to save him, the captain, who was a cool calculator, thought the chance of losing seven men was greater than that of saving one, so the poor fellow was left to his fate. The ship, it is true, was hove too; but

she drifted to leeward much faster than the unfortunate man could swim, though he was one of the best swimmers I ever beheld.

It was heart-breaking to see the manly but ineffectual exertions made by this gallant youth to regain the ship; but all his powers only served to prolong his misery. We saw him nearly a mile to windward, at one moment riding on the top of the mountainous wave, at the next, sinking into the deep valley between, till at last we saw him no more! His sad fate was long deplored in the ship. I thought at the time that the captain was cruel in not sending a boat for him; but I am now convinced, from experience, that he submitted only to hard necessity, and chose the lesser evil of the two.

The fate of this young man was a serious warning to me. I had become, from habit, so extremely active, and so fond of displaying my newly-acquired gymnastics, called by the sailors "sky-larking," that my speedy exit was often

prognosticated by the old quarter-masters, and even by the officers. It was clearly understood that I was either to be drowned or was to break my neck; for the latter I took my chance pretty fairly, going up and down the rigging like a monkey. Few of the topmen could equal me in speed, still fewer surpass me in feats of daring activity. I could run along the topsail yards out to the yard-arm, go from one mast to the other by the stays, or down on deck in the twinkling of an eye by the topsail halyards; and, as I knew myself to be an expert swimmer, I cared little about the chance of being drowned; but when I witnessed the fate of the poor marine, who I saw could swim as well, if not better than myself, I became much more cautious. I perceived that there might be situations in which swimming could be of no use; and however beloved I might have been by the sailors, it was evident that, even if they had the inclination, they might not always have the

power to relieve me: from this time, I became much more guarded in my movements aloft.

A circumstance occurred shortly after we got to sea which afforded me infinite satisfaction. Murphy, whose disposition led him to bully every one whom he thought he could master, fixed a quarrel on a very quiet, gentlemanly young man, a supernumerary midshipman, who had come on board for a passage to his own ship, then down in the Bay of Biscay. The young man, resenting this improper behaviour, challenged Murphy to fight, and the challenge was accepted; but as the supernumerary was engaged to dine with the captain, he proposed that the meeting should not take place till after dinner, not wishing to exhibit a black eye at the captain's table. This was considered by Murphy as an evasion; and he added farther insult by saying that he supposed his antagonist wanted Dutch courage, and that if he did not get wine enough in the cabin, he would not fight at all.

The high spirited youth made no reply to this insolence; but, having dressed himself, went up to dinner; that over, and after the muster at quarters, he called Mr. Murphy into the steerage, and gave him as sound a drubbing as he ever received in his life. The fight, or set-to, lasted only a quarter of an hour, and the young supernumerary displayed so much science, and such a thorough use of his fists, as to defy the brutal force of his opponent, who could not touch him, and who was glad to retreat to his berth, followed by the groans and hisses of all the midshipmen, in which I most cordially joined.

After so clear a proof of the advantages of the science of self-defence, I determined to acquire it; and, with the young stranger for my tutor, I soon became a proficient in the art of boxing, and able to cope with Murphy and his supporters.

There was a part of my duty which, I am free to confess, I hated: this was keeping watch

at night. I loved sleep, and, after ten o'clock, I could not keep my eyes open. Neither the buckets of water which were so liberally poured over me by the midshipmen, under the facetious appellation of "blowing the grampus," nor any expostulation or punishments inflicted on me by the first lieutenant, could rouse my *dormant* energies after the first half of the watch was expired. I was one of the most determined votaries of Somnus; and for his sake, endured every sort of persecution. The first lieutenant took me into his watch, and tried every means, both of mildness and coercion, to break me of this evil habit. I was sure, however, to escape from him, and to conceal myself in some hole or corner, where I slept out the remainder of the watch; and the next morning, I was, as regularly, mast-headed to do penance during the greater part of the day for my deeds of darkness. I believe that of the first two years of my servitude, one half of my waking hours, at least, were passed aloft.

I took care, however, to provide myself with books, and on the whole, was perhaps better employed than I should have been in my berth below. Handstone, though a martinet, was a gentleman; and as he felt a great interest in the young officers in the ship, so he took much pains in the instruction and improvement of them. He frequently expostulated with me on the great impropriety of my conduct: my answer invariably was, that I was as sensible of it as he could be, but that I could not help it; that I deserved all the punishment I met with, and threw myself entirely on his mercy. He used frequently to call me over to the weather side of the deck, when he would converse with me on any topic which he thought might interest or amuse me. Finding I was tolerably well read in history, he asked my opinion, and gave me his own with great good sense and judgment; but such was the irresistible weight of my eye-lids, that I used, when he was in the midst of a long dissertation, to slip down the gangway-

ladder and leave him to finish his discourses to the wind.

Now when this occurred, I was more severely punished than on any other occasion; for, to the neglect of duty, I added contempt both of his rank and the instruction he was offering to me. His wrath was also considerably increased when he only discovered my departure by the tittering of the other midshipmen and the quartermaster at the conn.

One evening, I completed my disgrace with him, though a great deal might be said in my own favour. He had sent me to the fore-top-mast head, at seven o'clock in the morning, and very unfeelingly, or forgetfully, kept me there the whole day. When he went off deck to his dinner, I came down into the top, made a bed for myself in one of the top-gallant studding sails, and, desiring the man who had the look-out to call me before the lieutenant was likely to come on deck, I very quietly began to prepare a sacrifice to my favourite deity,

Somnus; but as the look-out man did not see the lieutenant come up, I was caught napping just at dusk, when the lieutenant came on deck, and did me the honour to remember where he had left me. Looking at the fore-top-mast head, he called me down.

Like Milton's devils, who were "found sleeping by one they dread," up I sprang, and regained my perch by the topsail-tie, supposing, or rather hoping that he would not see me before the mast, in the obscurity of the evening; but he was too lynx-eyed, and had not presence of mind enough *not* to see what he should not have seen. He called to the three men in the top, and inquired where I was? They replied, at the mast-head. "What!" exclaimed Handstone, with an oath, "did I not see him, this moment, go up by the topsail-tie?"

"No, Sir," said the men; "he is now asleep at the mast-head."

"Come down here, you lying rascals, every

one of you," said the lieutenant, "and I'll teach you to speak the truth!"

I, who had by this time quietly resumed my station, was ordered down along with them; and we all four stood on the quarter-deck, while the following interrogations were put to us:—

"Now, Sir," said the first lieutenant to the captain of the top, "how dare you tell me that that young gentleman was at the mast-head, when I myself saw him 'shinning' up by the topsail-tie?"

I was sorry for the men, who, to save me, had got themselves into jeopardy; and I was just going to declare the truth, and take the whole odium upon myself, when, to my utter astonishment, the man boldly answered, "He *was* at the mast-head, Sir, upon my honour."

"Your honour!" cried the lieutenant, with contempt: then, turning to the other men, he put the same question to them both in succession, and received the same positive answers; so that I

really began to think I had been at the mast-head all the time, and had been dreaming I was in the top. At last, turning to me, he said, "Now, Sir, I ask you, on your honour, as an officer and a gentleman, where were you when I first hailed?"

"At the mast-head, Sir," said I.

"Be it so," he replied: "as you are an officer and a gentleman, I am bound to believe you." Then turning on his heel, he walked away in a greater rage than I ever remember to have seen him.

I plainly perceived that I was not believed, and that I had lost his good opinion. Yet, to consider the case fairly and impartially, how could I have acted otherwise? I had been much too long confined to the mast-head—as long as a man might take to go from London to Bath in a stage coach; I had lost all my meals; and these poor fellows, to save me from further punishment, had voluntarily exposed themselves to a flogging at the gangway by telling a barefaced

falsehood in my defence. Had I not supported them, they would certainly have been flogged, and I should have lost myself with every person aboard ; I therefore came to that paradoxical conclusion on the spot, namely, that, as a man of honour and a gentleman, I was bound to tell a lie in order to save those poor men from a cruel punishment.

I am sensible that this is a case to lay before the bench of bishops ; and though I never pretended to the constancy of a martyr, had the consequences been on myself alone, I should have had no hesitation in speaking the truth. The lieutenant was to blame, first, by too great a severity ; and, secondly, by too rigid an inquiry into a subject not worth the trouble. Still my conscience smote me that I had done wrong ; and when the rage of the lieutenant had abated, so as to insure the impunity of the men, I took the earliest opportunity of explaining to him the motives for my conduct, and the painful situation in which I stood. He received

my excuses coldly, and we never were friends again.

Our captain, who was a dashing sort of a fellow, contrived to brush up the enemy's quarters, on the coast of France. On one of our boat-expeditions, I contrived to slip away with the rest; we landed, and surprised a battery, which we blew up, and spiked the guns. The French soldiers ran for their lives, and we plundered the huts of some poor fishermen. I went in with the rest, in hopes of finding plunder, and for my deserts caught a Tartar. A large skait lay with its mouth open, into which I thrust my fore-finger, to drag him away; the animal was not dead, and closing his jaws, divided my finger to the bone—this was the only blood spilt on the occasion.

Though guilty myself, I was sorry to see the love of plunder prevail so extensively among us. The sailors took away articles utterly useless to them; and, after carrying

them a certain distance, threw them down for others equally useless. I have since often reflected how justly I was punished for my fault, and how needlessly we inflicted the horrors of war on those inoffensive and unhappy creatures.

Our next attempt was of a more serious nature, and productive of still greater calamity to the unoffending and industrious, the usual victims of war, while the instigators are reposing in safety on their down beds.

CHAPTER V.

My life is spann'd already;
*   *   *   *   *
Go with me, like good angels, to my end.
HENRY VIII.

Danger, like an ague, subtly taints
Even then when we sit idly in the sun.
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

I HAD never been able to regain the confidence and esteem of the first lieutenant since the unfortunate affair of the mast-head. He was certainly an excellent and a correct officer, too much so to overlook what he considered a breach of honour. I, therefore, easily reconciled myself to a separation, which occurred very soon after. We chaced a ship into the

Bay of Arcasson, when, as was customary, she sought safety under a battery; and the captain, according to our custom, resolved to cut her out.

For this purpose, the boats were manned and armed, and every preparation made for the attack on the following morning. The command of the expedition was given to the first lieutenant, who accepted of it with cheerfulness, and retired to his bed in high spirits, with the anticipation of the honour and profit which the dawn of day would heap upon him. He was proverbially brave and cool in action, so that the seamen followed him with confidence, as to certain victory. Whether any ill-omened dreams had disturbed his rest, or whether any reflections on the difficult and dangerous nature of the service had alarmed him, I could not tell; but in the morning we all observed a remarkable change in his deportment. His ardour was gone; he walked the deck with a slow and measured pace, apparently in deep

thought; and, contrary to his usual manner, was silent and melancholy, abstracted, and inattentive to the duties of the ship.

The boats prepared for the service were manned; the officers had taken their seats in them; the oars were tossed up; the eyes of the young warriors beamed with animation, and we waited for Mr. Handstone, who still walked the deck, absorbed in his own reflections. He was at length recalled to a sense of his situation by the captain, who in a tone of voice more than usually loud, asked him if he intended to take the command of the expedition? He replied "most certainly;" and with a firm and animated step, crossed the quarter-deck, and went into his boat.

I, following, seated myself by his side; he looked at me with a foreboding indifference: had he been in his usual mood, he would have sent me to some other boat. We had a long pull before we reached the object of our intended attack, which we found moored close in shore, and

well prepared for us. A broadside of grape shot was the first salute we received. It produced the same effect on our men as the spur to a fiery steed. We pulled alongside, and began to scramble up in the best manner we could. Handstone in an instant regained all his wonted animation, cheered his men, and with his drawn sword in his hand, mounted the ship's side, while our men at the same time poured in vollies of musquetry, and then followed their intrepid leader.

In our boat, the first alongside, eleven men, out of twenty-four, lay killed or disabled. Disregarding these, the lieutenant sprang up. I followed close to him; he leaped from the bulwark in upon her deck, and, before I could lift my cutlass in his defence, fell back upon me, knocked me down in his fall, and expired in a moment. He had thirteen musquet-balls in his chest and stomach.

I had no time to disengage myself before I was trampled on, and nearly suffocated by the

pressure of my shipmates, who, burning to gain the prize, or to avenge our fall, rushed on with the most undaunted bravery. I was supposed to be dead, and treated accordingly, my poor body being only used as a stop for the gang-way, where the ladder was unshipped. There I lay fainting with the pressure, and nearly suffocated with the blood of my brave leader, on whose breast my face rested, with my hands crossed over the back of my head, to save my skull, if possible, from the heels of my friends, and the swords of my enemies; and while reason held her seat, I could not help thinking that I was just as well where I was, and that a change of position might not be for the better.

About eight minutes decided the affair, though it certainly did seem to me, in my then unpleasant situation, much longer. Before it was over I had fainted, and before I regained my senses the vessel was under weigh, and out of gun-shot from the batteries.

The first moments of respite from carnage were employed in examining the bodies of the killed and wounded. I was numbered among the former, and stretched out between the guns by the side of the first lieutenant and the other dead bodies. A fresh breeze blowing through the ports revived me a little, but, faint and sick, I had neither the power or inclination to move; my brain was confused; I had no recollection of what had happened, and continued to lie in a sort of stupor, until the prize came alongside of the frigate, and I was roused by the cheers of congratulation and victory from those who had remained on board.

A boat instantly brought the surgeon and his assistants to inspect the dead and assist the living. Murphy came along with them. He had not been of the boarding-party; and seeing my supposed lifeless corpse, he gave it a slight kick, saying, at the same time, "Here is a young cock that has done crowing! Well,

for a wonder, this chap has cheated the gallows!"

The sound of the fellow's detested voice was enough to recal me from the grave, if my orders had been signed: I faintly exclaimed, "You are a liar!" which, even with all the melancholy scene around us, produced a burst of laughter at his expense. I was removed to the ship, put to bed, and bled, and was soon able to narrate the particulars of my adventure; but I continued a long while dangerously ill.

The soliloquy of Murphy over my supposed dead body, and my laconic reply, were the cause of much merriment in the ship: the midshipmen annoyed him by asserting that he had saved my life, as nothing but his hated voice could have awoke me from my sleep of death.

The fate of the first lieutenant was justly deplored by all of us; though I cannot deny my christian-like acquiescence in the will of

Providence in this, as well as on a former occasion, when the witnesses of my weakness had been removed for ever out of my way. As I saw it was impossible to regain his good opinion, I thought it was quite as well that we should part company. That he had a strong presentiment of his death was proved; and though I had often heard these instances asserted, I never before had it so clearly brought home to my senses.

The prize was called L'Aimable Julie, laden with coffee, cotton, and indigo; mounted fourteen guns; had, at the commencement of the action, forty-seven men, of whom eight were killed, and sixteen wounded. The period of our return into port, according to our orders, happened to coincide with this piece of good fortune, and we came up to Spithead, where our captain met with a hearty welcome from the admiral.

Having delivered his "butcher's bill," *i. e.* the list of killed and wounded, together

with an account of our defects, they were sent up to the Admiralty; and, by return of post, we were ordered to fit foreign: and although no one on board, not even the captain, was supposed to know our destination, the girls on the Point assured us it was the Mediterranean; and this turned out to be the fact.

A few days only were spent in hurried preparation, during which I continued to write to my father and mother. In return I received all I required, which was a remittance in cash. This I duly acknowledged by a few lines as the ship was unmooring. We sailed, and soon after arrived without accident at Gibraltar, where we found general orders for any ship that might arrive from England to proceed and join the admiral at Malta. In a few hours our provisions and water were complete; but we were not in so much haste to arrive at Malta as we were to quit Gibraltar—hugging the Spanish coast, in hopes of picking up something to insure

us as hearty a welcome at Valette as we found on our last return to Portsmouth.

Early on the second morning of our departure we made Cape de Gaete. As the day dawned we discovered four sail in the wind's eye, and close in shore. The wind was light, and all sail was made in chase. We gained very little on them for many hours, and towards evening it fell calm. The boats were then ordered to pursue them, and we sat off, diverging a little from each other's course, or, as the French would say, *deployée*, to give a better chance of falling in with them. I was in the gig with the master, and, that being the best running boat, we soon came up with one of the feluccas. We fired musquetry at her; but, having a light breeze, she would not bring-to. We then took good aim at the helmsman, and hit him. The man only shifted the helm from his right hand to his left, and kept on his course. We still kept firing at this intrepid

fellow, and I felt it was like wilful murder, since he made no resistance, but steadily endeavoured to escape.

At length we got close under the stern, and hooked on with our boat-hook. This the Spaniards unhooked, and we dropped astern, having laid our oars in ; but the breeze dying entirely away, we again pulled up alongside, and took possession. The poor man was still at the helm, bleeding profusely. We offered him every assistance, and asked why he did not surrender sooner. He replied that he was an old Castilian. Whether he meant that an earlier surrender would have disgraced him, or that he contemplated, from his former experience, a chance of escape to the last moment, I cannot tell. Certain it is that no one ever behaved better ; and I felt that I would have given all I possessed to have healed the wounds of this patient, meek, and undaunted old man, who uttered no complaint, but submitted to his fate with a magnanimity which would have done

credit to Socrates himself. He had received four musket-balls in his body, and, of course, survived his capture but a very few hours.

We found to our surprise that this vessel, with the three others, one of which was taken by another of our boats, were from Lima. They were single-masted, about thirty tons burthen, twelve men each, and were laden with copper, hides, wax, and cochineal, and had been out five months. They were bound to Valentia, from which they were only one day's sail when we intercepted them. Such is the fortune of war! This gallant man, after a voyage of incredible labour and difficulty, would in a few hours have embraced his family, and gladdened their hearts with the produce of honest industry and successful enterprize; when, in a moment, all their hopes were blasted by our legal murder and robbery; and our prize-money came to our pockets with the tears, if not the curses, of the widow and the orphan!

From some information which the captain

obtained in the prize, he was induced to stand over towards the Balearic Islands. We made Ivica, and stood past it; then ran for Palma Bay in the island of Majorca; here we found nothing, to our great disappointment, and continued our course round the island.

An event occurred here, so singular as scarcely to be credible; but the fact is well attested, as there were others who witnessed it beside myself. The water was smooth, and the day remarkably fine; we were distant from the shore more than a mile and a quarter, when the captain, wishing to try the range of the main-deck guns, which were long eighteen-pounders, ordered the gunner to elevate one of them and fire it towards the land. The gunner asked whether he should point the gun at any object. A man was seen walking on the white sandy beach, and as there did not appear to be the slightest chance of hitting him, for he only looked like a speck, the captain desired the gunner to fire at him; he did so, and the man fell. A herd of bullocks at this moment was

seen coming out of the woods, and the boats were sent with a party to shoot some of them for the ship's company.

When we landed we found that the ball had cut the poor man in two; and what made the circumstance more particularly interesting was, that he was evidently a man of consequence. He was well dressed, had on black breeches and silk stockings; he was reading Ovid's Metamorphoses, and still grasped the book, which I took out of his hand.

We have often heard of the miraculous powers ascribed to a chance shot, but never could we have supposed that this devilish ball could have gone so far, or done so much mischief. We buried the remains of the unfortunate gentleman in the sand, and having selected two or three bullocks out of the herd, shot them, skinned and divided them into quarters, loaded our boat, and returned on board.

I had taken the book out of the hand of the deceased, and from his neck a small miniature

of a beautiful female. The brooch in his shirt I also brought away; and when I gave an account to the captain of what had happened, I offered him these articles. He returned them all to me, desired me to keep them until I could see any of the friends of the deceased, and appeared so much distressed at the accident, that we never mentioned it afterwards; and in the course of the time we were together, it was nearly forgotten. The articles remained in my possession unnoticed for many years.

Two days after, we fell in with a vessel of a suspicious appearance; and it being calm, the boats were sent in chace. They found her, on their approach, to be a xebeque, under French colours; but these they very soon hauled down, and showed no others. As we came within hail, they told us to keep off, and that if we attempted to board they should fire into us. This was not a threat likely to deter a British officer, and particularly such fire-eaters as ours. So to it

we went, and a desperate struggle ensued, the numbers being nearly equal on both sides; but they had the advantage of their own deck and bulwarks. We got on board, however, and in a few minutes gained possession, with a loss, on our side, of sixteen; and on that of our opponent's of twenty-six, killed and wounded.

But great was our sorrow and disappointment when we discovered that we had shed the blood of our friends, while we had lost our own. The vessel, it appeared, was a Gibraltar privateer; they took us for French, our boats being fitted with thoels and grummets for the oars, in the French fashion; and we supposed them to be French from their colours and the language in which they hailed us. In this affair, we had three officers killed or wounded, and some of our best men. The privateer was manned by a mixed crew of all nations, but chiefly Greeks; and although ostensibly with a commission signed by the governor of Gibraltar, were no

doubt little scrupulous as to the colours of any vessel they might encounter, provided she was not too strong for them.

After this unfortunate mistake we proceeded to Malta: the captain expecting a severe rebuke from his admiral, for his rashness in sending away his boats to attack a vessel without knowing her force. Fortunately for him, the admiral was not there; and before we met him, the number of prizes we had taken were found sufficient in his eyes to cover our multitude of sins, so the affair blew over.

While we lay in Malta harbour, my friend Murphy fell overboard one night, just after all the boats were hoisted in; he could not swim, and would have been drowned if I had not jumped overboard and held him up until a boat was lowered down to our assistance. The officers and ship's company gave me more credit for this action than I really deserved. To have saved any person under such circumstances, they said, was a noble deed; but to risk my

life for a man who had always, from my first coming into the ship, been my bitterest enemy, was more than they could have expected, and was undoubtedly the noblest revenge that I could have taken. But they were deceived—they knew me not: it was my vanity, and the desire of oppressing my enemy under an intolerable weight of obligation, that induced me to rush to his rescue; moreover, as I stood on the gangway witnessing his struggles for life, I felt that I was about to lose all the revenge I had so long laid up in store; in short, I could not spare him, and only saved him, as a cat does a mouse, to torment him.

Murphy acknowledged his obligations, and said the terrors of death were upon him; but in a few days forgot all I had done for him, consummated his own disgrace, and raised my character on the ruins of his own. On some frivolous occasion he threw a basin of dirty water in my face as I passed through the steerage; this was too good an opportunity to

gratify my darling passion. I had long watched for an occasion to quarrel with him; but as he had been ill during our passage from Gibraltar to Malta, I could not justify any act of aggression. He had now recovered, and was in the plenitude of his strength, and I astonished him by striking the first blow.

A set-to followed; I brought up all my scientific powers in aid of my strength and the memory of former injuries. I must do him the justice to say he never showed more game—but he had every thing to contend for; if I was beaten I was only where I was before, but with him the case would have been different. A fallen tyrant has no friends. Stung to madness by the successful hits I planted in his face, he lost his temper, while I was cool; he fought wildly, I stopped all his blows, and paid them with interest. He stood forty-three rounds, and then gave in with his eyes bunged up, and his face so swollen and so covered with blood, as not to be known by his friends if he had had any.

I had hardly a mark; most of our midshipmen were absent in prizes; but the two seniors of our berth, an old master's mate past promotion, and the surgeon's assistant, who had held my wrist when I was cobbed, were present as the supporters of Murphy during the combat. I always determined whenever I gained a battle to follow it up. The shouts of victory resounded in the berth—the youngsters joined with me in songs of triumph, and gave great offence to the trio. The young Esculapius, a white-faced, stupid, pock-marked, unhealthy-looking man, was fool enough to say, that although I had beaten Murphy, I was not to suppose myself master of the berth. I replied to this only by throwing a biscuit at his head, as a shot of defiance; and, darting on him before he could get his legs from under the table, I thrust my fingers into his neckcloth, which I twisted so tightly, that I held him till he was nearly choked, giving his head at the same time two or three good thumps against the ship's side.

Finding that he grew black in the face, I let him go, and asked if he required any farther satisfaction, to which he replied in the negative, and from that day he was always dutiful and obedient to me. The old superannuated mate, a sturdy merchant seaman, seemed greatly dismayed at the successive defeats of his allies, and I believe would have gladly concluded a separate peace. He had never offered to come to the assistance of the doctor, although appealed to in the most pitiable gestures.

This I observed with secret pleasure, and would the more willingly have given him a brush, as I saw he was disinclined to make the attempt. I was, however, determined to be at the head of the mess. At twelve o'clock that night I was relieved from the first watch, and coming down, I found the old mate in a state of beastly intoxication. Thus he went to his hammock, and fell asleep. While he lay "dormant," I took a piece of lunar caustic, which I wetted, and drew stripesand figures all over his

weather-beaten face, increasing his natural ugliness to a frightful degree, and made him look very like a New Zealand warrior. The next morning, when he was making his toilet, my party were all ready prepared for the *éclaircissement.* He opened his little dirty chest, and having strapped an old razor, and made a lather in a wooden soap box, which bore evident marks of the antique, he placed a triangular piece of a looking-glass against the reclining lid of the chest, and began the operation of shaving. His start back with horror, when he beheld his face, I shall never forget: it outdid the young Roscius, when he saw the ghost of Hamlet. Having wetted his forefinger with his tongue, the old mate tried to remove the stain of the caustic, but the "d—d spot" still remained, and we, like so many young imps, surrounded him, roaring with laughter.

I boldly told him that he bore my marks as well as Murphy and the doctor; and I added, with a degree of cruel mockery which might have been spared, that I thought it right to put

all my servants in black to-day. I asked whether he was contented with the arrangement, or whether he chose to appeal against my decree; he signified that he had no more to say.

Thus, in twenty-four hours, I had subdued the great allies who had so long oppressed me. I immediately effected a revolution; dismissed the doctor from the office of caterer—took the charge on myself, and administered the most impartial justice. I made the oldsters pay their mess which they had not correctly done before; I caused an equal distribution of all luxuries from which the juniors had till then been debarred; and I flatter myself I restored, in some degree, the golden age in the cockpit. There were no more battles, for there was no hope of victory on their part, nor any thing to contend for on mine. I never took any advantage of my strength, farther than to protect the youngsters. I proved by this that I was not quarrelsome, but had only struggled for my own emancipation—that gained, I was satisfied. My conduct

was explained to the captain and the officers; and being fully and fairly discussed, did me great service. I was looked upon with respect, and treated with marks of confidence, not usual towards a person so young.

We left Malta, expecting to find our commander-in-chief off Toulon: but it seldom happens that the captain of a frigate is in any hurry to join his admiral, unless charged with despatches of importance. This not being our case, we somehow or other tumbled down the Mediterranean before a strong Levanter, and then had to work back again along the coast of Spain and France. It is an ill wind, they say, that blows nobody good; and we found it so with us; for off Toulon, in company with the fleet, if we did take prizes they became of little value, because there were so many to share them. Our captain, who was a man of the most consummate *ruse de guerre* I ever saw or heard of, had two reasons for sending his prizes to Gibraltar. The first was, that we should, in all

probability, be sent down there to receive our men, and have the advantage of the cruize back; the second, that he was well aware of the corrupt practices of the admiralty-court at Malta.

All the vessels, therefore, which we had hitherto captured, were sent to Gibraltar for adjudication, and we now added to their number. We had the good fortune to take a large ship laden with barilla, and a brig with tobacco and wine. The charge of the last I was honoured with; and no prime minister ever held a situation of such heavy responsibility with such corrupt supporters. So much was the crew of the frigate reduced by former captures and the unlucky affair with the Maltese privateer, that I was only allowed three men. I was, however, so delighted with my first command, that, I verily believe, if they had only given me a dog and a pig, I should have been satisfied.

The frigate's boat put us on board. It blew fresh from the eastward, and I instantly put the

helm up, and shaped my course for the old rock. The breeze soon freshened into a gale: we ran slap before it, but soon found it necessary to take in the top-gallant sails. This we at last accomplished, one at a time. We then thought a reef or two in the topsails would be acceptable; but that was impossible. We tried a Spanish reef; that is, let the yards come down on the cap: and she flew before the gale, which had now increased to a very serious degree. Our cargo of wine and tobacco was, unfortunately, stowed by a Spanish and not a British owner. The difference was very material to me. An Englishman, knowing the vice of his country-men, would have placed the wine underneath and the tobacco above. Unfortunately it was, in this instance, the reverse, and my men very soon helped themselves to as much as rendered them nearly useless to me, being more than half seas over.

We got on pretty well, however, till about two o'clock in the morning, when the man at

the helm, unable to wake the other two seamen to fetch him a drop, thought he might trust the brig to steer herself for a minute, while he quenched his thirst at the wine-cask: the vessel instantly broached to, that is, came with her broadside to the wind and sea, and away went the mainmast by the board. Fortunately, the foremast stood. The man who had just quitted the helm had not time to get drunk, and the other two were so much frightened that they got sober.

We cleared the wreck as well as we could, got her before the wind again, and continued on our course. But a British sailor, the most daring of all men, is likewise the most regardless of warning or of consequences. The loss of the mainmast, instead of shewing my men the madness of their indulgence in drink, turned the scale the opposite way. If they could get drunk with two masts, how much more could they do so with one, when they had only half as much sail to look after? With such a rule of three, there

was no reasoning; and they got drunk, and continued drunk during the whole passage.

Good luck often attends us when we don't deserve it:

"The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,"

as Dibdin says, had an eye upon us. I knew we could not easily get out of the Gut of Gibraltar without knowing it; and accordingly, on the third day after leaving the frigate, we made the rock early in the morning, and, by two o'clock, rounded Europa Point. I had ordered the men to bend the cable, and, like many other young officers, fancied it was done because they said it was, and because I had ordered it. It never once occurred to me to go and see if my orders had been executed: indeed, to say the truth, I had quite as much as I could turn my hand to: I was at the helm from twelve o'clock at night till six in the morning, looking out for the land; and when I ordered one of the men to relieve me, I directed

him how to steer, and fell into a profound sleep, which lasted till ten o'clock; after which I was forced to exert the whole of my ingenuity in order to fetch into the bay, and prevent being blown through the Gut; so that the bending of the cable escaped my memory until the moment I required the use of the anchor.

As I passed under the stern of one of the ships of war in the bay, with my prize colours flying, the officer on deck hailed me, and said I had "better shorten sail." I thought so too, but how was this to be done? My whole ship's company were too drunk to do it, and though I begged for some assistance from his Majesty's ship, it blew so fresh, and we passed so quick, that they could not hear me, or were not inclined. Necessity has no law. I saw among the other ships in the bay a great lump of a transport, and I thought she was much better able to bear the concussion I intended for her than any other vessel; because I had heard

then, and have been made sure of it since, that her owners (like all other owners) were cheating the government out of thousands of pounds a-year. She was lying exactly in the part of the bay assigned for the prizes; and as I saw no other possible mode of "bringing the ship to anchor," I steered for "the lobster-smack," and ran slap on board of her, to the great astonishment of the master, mate, and crew.

The usual expletives, a volley of oaths and curses on our lubberly heads, followed the shock. This I expected, and was as fully prepared for as I was for the fall of my foremast, which, taking the fore-yard of the transport, fell over the starboard quarter, and greatly relieved me on the subject of shortening sail. Thus, my pretty brig was first reduced to a sloop and then to a hulk; fortunately, her bottom was sound. I was soon cut clear of the transport, and called out in a very manly voice, "Let go the anchor."

This order was obeyed with promptitude:

away it went, sure enough; but the devil a cable was there bent to it, and my men being all stupidly drunk, I let my vessel drift athwart-hawse of a frigate; the commanding officer of which, seeing I had no other cable bent, very kindly sent a few hands on board to assist me; and by five o'clock I was safely moored in the bay of Gibraltar, and walked my quarter-deck as high in my own estimation as Columbus, when he made the American islands.

But short, short was my power! my frigate arrived the next morning. The captain sent for me, and I gave him an account of my voyage and my disasters; he very kindly consoled me for my misfortune; and so far from being angry with me for losing my masts, said it was wonderful, under all circumstances, how I had succeeded in saving the vessel. We lay only a fortnight at Gibraltar, when news arrived that the French had entered Spain, and very shortly after orders came from England to suspend all hostilities against the Spaniards. This we

thought a bore, as it almost annihilated any chance of prize-money ; at the same time that it increased our labours and stimulated our activity in a most surprising manner, and opened scenes to us far more interesting than if the war with Spain had continued.

We were ordered up to join the admiral off Toulon, but desired to look into the Spanish port of Carthagena, on our way, and to report the state of the Spanish squadron in that arsenal. We were received with great politeness by the governor and the officers of the Spanish fleet lying there. These people we found were men of talent and education; their ships were mostly dismantled, and they had not the means of equipping them.

CHAPTER VI.

Par. You give me most egregious indignity.
Laf. Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

NATURALLY anxious to behold a country from which we had hitherto been excluded for so many years, we all applied for leave to go on shore, and obtained it. Even the seamen were allowed the same indulgence, and went in parties of twenty and thirty at a time. We were followed and gaped at by the people; but shunned at the same time as "hereticos." The inns of the town, like all the rest of them in Spain, have

not improved since the days of the immortal Santillana—they were all more or less filled with the lowest of the rabble, and a set of bravos whose calling was robbery, and who cared little if murder were its accompaniment. The cookery was execrable. Garlic and oil were its principal ingredients. The olla podrida, and its constant attendant, the tomato sauce, were intolerable, but the wine was very well for a midshipman. Whenever we had a repast in any of these houses, the bravos endeavoured to pick a quarrel with us; and these fellows being always armed with stilettos, we found it necessary to be equally well prepared; and whenever we seated ourselves at a table we never failed to display the butts of our pistols, which kept them in decent order, for they are as cowardly as they are thievish. Our seamen not being so cautious, or so well provided with arms, were frequently robbed and assassinated by these rascals.

I was, on one occasion, near falling a victim to them. Walking in the evening with the

second master, and having a pretty little Spanish girl under my arm, for, to my shame be it spoken, I had already formed an acquaintance with the frail sisterhood, four of these villains accosted us. We soon perceived, by their manner of holding their cloaks, that they had their stilettos ready. I desired my companion to draw his dirk, to keep close to me, and not to let them get between us and the wall. Seeing that we were prepared, they wished us "buenos noches," (good night); and, endeavouring to put us off our guard by entering into conversation, asked us to give them a cigar, which my companion would have done, had I not cautioned him not to quit his dirk with his right hand, for this was all they wanted.

In this defensive posture we continued, until we had nearly reached the plaza or great square, where many people were walking and enjoying themselves by moonlight, the usual custom of the country. "Now," said I to my friend, "let us make a start from these fellows. When

I run, do you follow me, and don't stop till we are in the middle of the square."

The manœuvre was successful; we out-ran the thieves, who were not aware of our plan, and were encumbered with their heavy cloaks. Finding we had escaped, they turned upon the girl, and robbed her of her miserable earnings. This we saw, but could not prevent; such was the police of Spain then, nor has it improved since.

This was the last time I ventured on shore at night, except to go once with a party of our officers to the house of the Spanish admiral, who had a very pretty niece, and was *liberale* enough not to frown on us poor heretics. She was indeed a pretty creature: her lovely black eyes, long eye-lashes, and raven hair, betrayed a symptom of Moorish blood, at the same time that her ancient family name and high good breeding gave her the envied appellation of *Vieja Christiana.*

This fair creature was pleased to bestow a

furtive glance of approbation on my youthful form and handsome dress. My vanity was tickled. I spoke French to her: she understood it imperfectly, and pretended to know still less of it, from the hatred borne by all the Spaniards at that time to the French nation.

We improved our time, however, which was but short; and, before we parted, perfectly understood each other. I thought I could be contented to give up every thing, and reside with her in the wilds of Spain.

The time of our departure came, and I was torn away from my Rosaritta, not without the suspicions of my captain and shipmates that I had been a too highly favoured youth. This was not true. I loved the dear angel, but never had wronged her; and I went to sea in a mood which I sometimes thought might end in an act of desperation: but salt water is an admirable specific against love, at least against such love as that was.

We joined the admiral off Toulon, and were

ordered by him to cruize between Perpignan and Marseilles. We parted from the fleet on the following day, and kept the coast in a continued state of alarm. Not a vessel dared to shew her nose out of port: we had her if she did. Batteries we laughed at, and either silenced them with our long eighteen-pounders, or landed and blew them up.

In one of these little skirmishes I had very nearly been taken, and should, in that case, have missed all the honour, and glory, and hair-breadth escapes which will be found related in the following pages. I should either have been sabred in mere retaliation, or marched off to Verdun for the remaining six years of the war.

We had landed to storm and blow up a battery, for which purpose we carried with us a bag of powder, and a train of canvas. Every thing went on prosperously. We came to a canal which it was necessary to cross, and the best swimmers were selected to convey the powder over

without wetting it. I was one of them. I took off my shoes and stockings to save them; and, after we had taken the battery, I was so intent on looking for the telegraphic signal box, that I had quite forgotten the intended explosion, until I heard the cry of "Run! run!" from those outside who had lighted the train.

I was at that moment on the wall of the fort, nearly thirty feet high, but sloping. I jumped one part, and scrambled the other, and ran away as fast as I could, amidst a shower of stones, which fell round me like an eruption of Vesuvius. Luckily I was not hit, but I had cut my foot in the leap, and was in much pain. I had two fields of stubble to pass, and my shoes and stockings were on the other side of the canal—the sharp straw entered the wound, and almost drove me mad, and I was tempted to sit down and resign myself to my fate.

However, I persevered, and had nearly reached the boats which were putting off, not aware of my absence, when a noise like distant thunder

reached my ears. This I soon found was cavalry from Cotte, which had come to defend the battery. I mustered all my strength, and plunged into the sea to swim off to the boats, and so little time had I to spare, that some of the enemy's chasseurs, on their black horses, swam in after me, and fired their pistols at my head.

The boats were at this time nearly a quarter of a mile from the shore ; the officers in them fortunately perceived the cavalry, and saw me at the same time : a boat laid on her oars, which with great difficulty I reached, and was taken in ; but so exhausted with pain and loss of blood, that I was carried on board almost dead ; my foot was cut to the bone, and I continued a month under the surgeon's care.

I had nearly recovered from this accident, when we captured a ship, with which Murphy was sent as prize-master, and the same evening a schooner, which we cut out from her anchorage. The command of this latter vessel was given to me—it was late in the evening, and the hurry

was so great that the keg of spirits intended for myself and crew was not put on board. This was going from one extreme to the other; in my last ship we had too much liquor, and in this too little. Naturally thirsty, our desire for drink needed not the stimulus of salt fish and calavances, for such was our cargo and such was our food, and deeply did we deplore the loss of our spirits.

On the third day after leaving the frigate, on our way to Gibraltar, I fell in with a ship on the coast of Spain, and knew it to be the one Murphy commanded, by a remarkable white patch in the main-topsail. I made all sail in chase, in hopes of obtaining some spirits from him, knowing that he had more than he could consume, even if he and his people got drunk every day. When I came near him, he made all the sail he could. At dusk I was near enough almost to hail him, but he stood on; and I, having a couple of small three-pounders on board, with some powder, fired one of them as

a signal. This I repeated again and again; but he would not bring to, and when it was dark, I lost sight of him, and saw him no more until we met at Gibraltar.

Next morning I fell in with three Spanish fishing-boats. They took me for a French privateer, pulled up their lines, and made sail. I came up with them, and, firing a gun, they hove to and surrendered. I ordered them alongside; and, finding they had each a keg of wine on board, I condemned that part of their cargo as contraband; but I honestly offered payment for what I had taken. This they declined, finding I was "Ingles," too happy to think they were not in the hands of the French. I then gave each of them a pound of tobacco, which not only satisfied them, but confirmed them in the newly received opinion among their countrymen, that England was the bravest as well as the most generous of nations. They offered every thing their boat contained; but I declined all most nobly, because I had

obtained all I wanted; and we parted with mutual good will, they shouting "*Viva Ingleterre!*" and we drinking them a good passage in their own wine.

Many days elapsed before we reached Gibraltar: the winds were light, and the weather fine; but as we had discovered that the fishing-boats had wine, we took care to supply our cellar without any trouble from the excise; and, from our equitable mode of barter, I had no reason to think that his Majesty King George, lost any of his deserved popularity by our conduct. When we reached Gibraltar, I had still a couple of good kegs wherewith to regale my messmates; though I was sorry to find the frigate and the rest of her prizes had got in before us. Murphy, indeed, did not arrive till the day after me.

I was on the quarter-deck when he came in; and, to my astonishment, he reported that he had been chased by a French privateer, and had

beat her off after a four hours' action—that his rigging had suffered a good deal, but that he had not a man hurt. I let him run on till the evening. Many believed him ; but some doubted. At dinner, in the gun-room, his arrogance knew no bounds; and, when half drunk, my three men were magnified into a well-manned brig, as full of men and guns as she could stuff!

Sick of all this nonsense, I then simply related the story as it had occurred, and sent for the quarter-master, who was with me, and who confirmed all my statement. From that moment he was a mark of contempt in the ship. Every lie was a Murphy, and every Murphy a liar. He dared not resent this scorn of ours; and found himself so uncomfortable, that he offered no objection to the removal proposed by the captain; his character followed him, and he never obtained promotion. It is a satisfaction to me to reflect that I not only had my full revenge on

this man, but that I had been the instrument of turning him out of an honourable profession which he would have disgraced.

This was no time for frigates to be idle; and if I chose to give the name of mine and my captain, the naval history of the country would prove that our's, of all other ships, was one of the most distinguished in the cause of Spanish freedom. The south of Spain became the theatre of the most cruel and desolating war. Our station was off Barcelona, and thence to Perpignan, the frontier of France, on the borders of Spain. Our duty (for which the enterprising disposition of our captain was admirably calculated) was to support the guerilla chiefs; to cut off the enemy's convoys of provisions, either by sea or along the road which lay by the sea shore; or to dislodge the enemy from any strong hold he might be in possession of.

I was absent from the ship on such services three and four weeks at a time, being attached to

a division of small-arm men under the command of the third lieutenant. We suffered very much from privations of all kinds. We never took with us more than one week's provision, and were frequently three weeks without receiving any supply. In the article of dress, our "catalogue of negatives," as a celebrated author says, "was very copious;" we had no shoes nor stockings—no linen, and not all of us had hats—a pocket-handkerchief was the common substitute for this article; we clambered over rocks, and wandered through the flinty or muddy ravines in company with our new allies, the hardy mountaineers.

These men respected our valour, but did not like our religion or our manners. They cheerfully divided their rations with us; but were always inexorable in their cruelty to the French prisoners; and no persuasion of ours could induce them to spare the lives of one of these unhappy people, whose cries and entreaties to the English to intercede for, or save them, were

always unavailing. They were either stabbed before our faces, or dragged to the top of a hill commanding a view of some fortress occupied by the French, and, in sight of their countrymen, their throats were cut from ear to ear.

Should the Christian reader condemn this horrid barbarity, as he certainly will, he must remember that these people were men whose every feeling had been outraged. Rape, conflagration, murder, and famine had every where followed the steps of the cruel invaders; and however we might lament their fate, and endeavour to avert it, we could not but admit that the retaliation was not without justice.

In this irregular warfare, we sometimes revelled in luxuries, and at others were nearly starved. One day, in particular, when fainting with hunger, we met a fat, rosy-looking capuchin: we begged him to shew us where we might procure some food, either by purchase or in any other way; but he neither knew where to procure any, nor had he any money: his

order, he said, forbade him to use it. As he turned away from us, in some precipitation, we thought we heard something rattle; and as necessity has no law, we took the liberty of searching the padre, on whose person we found forty dollars, of which we relieved him, assuring him that our consciences were perfectly clear, since his order forbade him to carry money; and that as he lived among good Christians, they would not allow him to want. He cursed us; but we laughed at him, because he had produced his own misfortune by his falsehood and hypocrisy.

This was the manner in which the Spanish priests generally behaved to us; and in this way we generally repaid them when we could. We kept the plunder—converted it into food—joined our party soon after, and supposed the affair was over; but the friar had followed us at a distance, and we perceived him coming up the hill where we were stationed. To avoid discovery we exchanged clothes, in such a manner as

to render us no longer cognizable. The friar made his complaint to the guerilla chief, whose eyes flashed fire at the indignant treatment his priest had received; and it is probable that bloodshed would have ensued had he been able to point out the culprits.

I kept my countenance though I had changed my dress, and as he looked at me with something beyond suspicion, I stared him full in the face, with the whole united powers of my matchless impudence, and, in a loud and menacing tone of voice, asked him in French if he took me for a brigand.

This question, as well as the manner in which it was put, silenced, if it did not satisfy, the priest. He seemed to listen with apparent conviction to the suggestion of some of our people, that he had been robbed by another party, and he set out in pursuit of them. I was quite tired of his importunities, and glad to see him depart. As he turned away, he gave me a very scrutinizing look, which I returned with ano-

ther, full of well-dissembled rage and scorn. My curling hair had been well-flattened down with a piece of soap, which I had in my pocket, and I had much more the appearance of a methodist parson than a pickpocket.

Some time previous to this, the frigate to which I belonged had been ordered on other services; and as I had no opportunity of joining her, I was placed, *pro tempore*, on board of another.

But as this chapter has already spun out its length, I shall refer my reader to the next for further particulars.

CHAPTER VII.

> The shout
> Of battle now began, and rushing sound
> Of onset * * * * *
> 'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left.
>
> MILTON.

From the deservedly high character borne by the captain of the frigate which I was ordered to join, he was employed by Lord Collingwood on the most confidential services; and we were sent to assist the Spaniards in their defence of the important fortress of Rosas, in Catalonia. It has already been observed, that the French general, St. Cyr, had entered that country, and, having taken Figueras and Gerona, was looking

with a wistful eye on the castle of Trinity, on the south-east side, the capture of which would be a certain prelude to the fall of Rosas.

My captain determined to defend it, although it had just been abandoned by another British naval officer, as untenable. I volunteered, though a supernumerary, to be one of the party, and was sent: nor can I but acknowledge that the officer who had abandoned the place had shewn more than a sound discretion. Every part of the castle was in ruins. Heaps of crumbling stones and rubbish, broken gun carriages, and split guns, presented to my mind a very unfavourable field of battle. The only advantage we appeared to have over the assailants was, that the breach which they had effected in the walls was steep in its ascent, and the loose stones either fell down upon them, or gave way under their feet, while we plied them with every kind of missile: this was our only defence, and all we had to prevent the enemy marching into the works, if works they could be called.

There was another and a very serious disadvantage attending our locality. The castle was situated very near the summit of a steep hill, the upper part of which was in possession of the enemy, who were, by this means, nearly on a level with the top of the castle, and, on that eminence, three hundred Swiss sharp shooters had effected a lodgment, and thrown up works within fifty yards of us, keeping up a constant fire at the castle. If a head was seen above the walls, twenty rifle bullets whizzed at it in a moment, and the same unremitted attention was paid to our boats as they landed.

On another hill, much to the northward, and consequently farther in-land, the French had erected a battery of six twenty-four pounders; this agreeable neighbour was only three hundred yards from us; and allowing short intervals for the guns to cool, this battery kept up a constant fire upon us from day-light till dark. I never could have supposed, in my boyish days, that the time would arrive when I should envy a cock upon

Shrove-Tuesday; yet such was my case when in this infernal castle. It was certainly not giving us fair play; we had no chance against such a force; but my captain was a knight-errant, and as I had volunteered, I had no right to complain. Such was the precision of the enemy's fire, that we could tell the stone that would be hit by the next shot, merely from seeing where the last had struck, and our men were frequently wounded by the splinters of granite, with which the walls were built, and others picked off like partridges, by the Swiss corps on the hill close to us.

Our force in the castle consisted of a hundred and thirty English seamen and marines, one company of Spanish, and another of Swiss troops in Spanish pay. Never were troops worse paid and fed, or better fired at. We all pigged in together; dirty straw and fleas for our beds; our food on the same scale of luxury; from the captain downwards there was no distinction. Fighting

is sometimes a very agreeable pastime, but excess "palls on the sense;" and here we had enough of it, without what I always thought an indispensable accompaniment, namely, a good belly full; nor did I conceive how a man could perform his duty without it; but here I was forced, with many others, to make the experiment, and when the boats could not land, which was often the case, we piped to dinner *pro forma*, as our captain liked regularity, and drank cold water to fill our stomachs.

I have often heard my poor old uncle say that no man knows what he can do till he tries; and the enemy gave us plenty of opportunities of displaying our ingenuity, industry, watchfulness, and abstinence. When poor Penelope wove her web, the poet says—

> "The night unravelled what the day began."

With us it was precisely the reverse: the day destroyed all the labours of the night. The hours of darkness were employed by us in filling sand-bags, and laying them in the breach,

clearing away rubbish, and preparing to receive the enemy's fire, which was sure to recommence at daylight. These avocations, together with a constant and most vigilant watch against surprise, took up so much of our time, that little was left for repose, and our meals required still less.

There was some originality in one of our modes of defence, and which, not being *secundum artem*, might have provoked the smile of an engineer. The captain contrived to make a shoot of smooth deal boards, which he received from the ship; these he placed in a slanting direction in the breach, and caused them to be well greased with cook's slush: so that the enemies, who wished to come into our hold, must have jumped down upon them, and would in an instant be precipitated into the ditch below, a very considerable depth, where they might either have remained till the doctor came to them, or, if they were able, begin their labours *de novo*. This was a very good bug-trap; for,

at that time, I thought just as little of killing a Frenchman as I did of destroying the filthy little nightly depredator just mentioned.

Besides this slippery trick, which we played them with great success, we served them another. We happened to have on board the frigate a large quantity of fish-hooks: these we planted, not only on the greasy boards, but in every part where the intruders were likely to place their hands or feet. The breach itself was mined, and loaded with shells and hand-grenades; masked guns, charged up to the muzzle with musket-balls, enfiladed the spot in every direction. Such were our defences; and, considering that we had been three weeks in the castle, opposed to such mighty odds, it is surprising that we only lost twenty men. The crisis was now approaching.

One morning, very early, I happened to have the look-out. The streak of fog which during the night hangs between the hills in that country, and presses down into the valleys, had

just begun to rise, and the stars to grow more dim above our heads, when I was looking over the castle wall towards the breach. The captain came out and asked me what I was looking at. I told him I hardly knew; but there did appear something unusual in the valley, immediately below the breach. He listened a moment, looked attentively with his night-glass, and exclaimed, in his firm voice, but in an undertoned manner, "To arms! — they are coming!"

In three minutes every man was at his post; and though all were quick, there was no time to spare, for by this time the black column of the enemy was distinctly visible, curling along the valley like a great centipede; and, with the daring enterprise so common among the troops of Napoleon, had begun in silence to mount the breach. It was an awful and eventful moment; but the coolness and determination of the little garrison was equal to the occasion.

The word was given to take good aim, and a volley from the masked guns and musquetry was poured into the thick of them. They paused—deep groans ascended! They retreated a few paces in confusion, then rallied, and again advanced to the attack; and now the fire on both sides was kept up without intermission. The great guns from the hill fort, and the Swiss sharp-shooters, still nearer, poured copious vollies upon us, and with loud shouts cheered on their comrades to the assault. As they approached and covered our mine, the train was fired, and up they went in the air, and down they fell buried in the ruins! Groans, screams, confusion, French yells, British hurras rent the sky! The hills resounded with the shouts of victory! We sent them hand-grenades in abundance, and broke their shins in glorious style! I must say that the French behaved nobly, though many a tall grenadier and pioneer fell by the symbol in front of his warlike cap. I cried with rage and excitement; and we

all fought like bull-dogs, for we knew there was no quarter to be given.

Ten minutes had elapsed since the firing began, and in that time many a brave fellow had bit the dust. The head of their attacking column had been destroyed by the explosion of our mine. Still they had re-formed, and were again half way up the breach when the day began to dawn; and we saw a chosen body of one thousand men, led on by their colonel, and advancing over the dead which had just fallen.

The gallant leader appeared to be as cool and composed as if he were at breakfast; with his drawn sword he pointed to the breach, and we heard him exclaim, "*suivez moi!*" I felt jealous of this brave fellow—jealous of his being a Frenchman; and I threw a lighted hand-grenade between his feet—he picked it up, and threw it from him to a considerable distance.

"Cool chap enough that," said the captain, who stood close to me; "I'll give him another;" which he did, but this the officer kicked away

with equal *sang froid* and dignity. "Nothing will cure that fellow," resumed the captain, "but an ounce of lead on an empty stomach—it's a pity, too, to kill so fine a fellow—but there is no help for it."

So saying, he took a musket out of my hand, which I had just loaded—aimed, fired—the colonel staggered, clapped his hand to his breast, and fell back into the arms of some of his men, who threw down their muskets, and took him on their shoulders, either unconscious or perfectly regardless of the death-work which was going on around them. The firing redoubled from our musketry on this little group, every man of whom was either killed or wounded. The colonel, again left to himself, tottered a few paces farther, till he reached a small bush, not ten yards from the spot where he received his mortal wound. Here he fell; his sword, which he still grasped in his right hand, rested on the boughs, and pointed upwards to the sky, as if

directing the road to the spirit of its gallant master.

With the life of the colonel, ended the hopes of the French for that day. The officers, we could perceive, did their duty—cheered, encouraged, and drove on their men, but all in vain! We saw them pass their swords through the bodies of the fugitives; but the men did not even mind that—they would only be killed in their own way—they had had fighting enough for one breakfast. The first impulse, the fiery onset, had been checked by the fall of their brave leader, and *sauve qui peut*, whether coming from the officers or drummers, no matter which, terminated the affair, and we were left a little time to breathe, and to count the number of our dead.

The moment the French perceived from their batteries that the attempt had failed, and that the leader of the enterprize was dead, they poured in an angry fire upon us. I stuck my hat on the bayonet of my musket, and just shewed it

above the wall. A dozen bullets were through it in a minute: very fortunately my head was not in it.

The fire of the batteries having ceased, which it generally did at stated periods, we had an opportunity of examining the point of attack. Scaling ladders, and dead bodies, lay in profusion. All the wounded had been removed; but what magnificent "food for powder" were the bodies which lay before us!—all, it would seem, picked men; not one less than six feet, and some more: they were clad in their grey capots, to render their appearance more *sombre*, and less discernible in the twilight of the morning; and as the weather was cold during the nights, I secretly determined to have one of these great coats as a *chere amie* to keep me warm in night-watches. I also resolved to have the colonel's sword to present to my captain; and as soon as it was dark I walked down the breach, brought up one of the scaling ladders, which I deposited

in the castle; and, having done so much for the king, I sat out to do something for myself.

It was pitch dark. I stumbled on; the wind blew a hurricane, and the dust and mortar almost blinded me; but I knew my way pretty well. Yet there was something very jackall-like, in wandering about among dead bodies in the night-time, and I really felt a horror at my situation. There was a dreadful stillness between the blasts, which the pitch darkness made peculiarly awful to an unfortified mind. It is for this reason, that I would ever discourage night-attacks, unless you can rely on your men. They generally fail: because the man of common bravery, who would acquit himself fairly in broad day-light, will hang back during the night. Fear and Darkness have always been firm allies; and are inseparably playing into each other's hands. Darkness conceals Fear, and therefore Fear loves Darkness, because it saves the coward from shame; and when the fear of

shame is the only stimulus to fight, day-light is essentially necessary.

I crept cautiously along, feeling for the dead bodies. The first I laid my hand on, made my blood curdle. It was the lacerated thigh of a grenadier, whose flesh had been torn off by a hand grenade. "Friend," said I, "if I may judge from the nature of your wound, your great coat is not worth having." The next subject I handled, had been better killed. A musquet ball through his head, had settled all his tradesmen's bills; and I hesitated not in becoming residuary legatee, as I was sure the assets would more than discharge the undertaker's bill; but the body was cold and stiff, and did not readily yield its garment.

I, however, succeeded in obtaining my object; in which I arrayed myself, and went on in search of the colonel's sword; but here I had been anticipated by a Frenchman. The colonel, indeed, lay there, stiff enough, but his sword

was gone. I was preparing to return, when I encountered, not a dead, but a living enemy.

"*Qui vive?*" said a low voice.

"*Anglois, bête!*" answered I, in a low tone; and added, "*mais les corsairs ne se battent pas.*"

"*C'est vrai,*" said he; and growling, "*bon soir,*" he was soon out of sight. I scrambled back to the castle, gave the countersign to the sentinel, and shewed my new great coat with a vast deal of glee and satisfaction; some of my comrades went on the same sort of expedition, and were rewarded with more or less success.

In a few days, the dead bodies on the beach, were nearly denuded by nightly visitors; but that of the colonel lay respected and untouched. The heat of the day had blackened it, and it was now deprived of all its manly beauty, and nothing remained but a loathsome corpse. The rules of war, as well as of humanity, demanded the honourable interment of the remains of this

hero; and our captain, who was the very flower of chivalry, desired me to stick a white handkerchief on a pike, as a flag of truce, and bury the bodies, if the enemy would permit us.

I went out accordingly, with a spade and a pick-axe; but the tirailleurs on the hill began with their rifles, and wounded one of my men. I looked at the captain, as much as to say, "Am I to proceed?" He motioned with his hand to go on, and I then began digging a hole by the side of a dead body, and the enemy, seeing my intention, desisted from firing. I had buried several, when the captain came out and joined me, with a view of reconnoitring the position of the enemy. He was seen from the fort, and recognized; and his intention pretty accurately guessed at.

We were near the body of the colonel, which we were going to inter; when the captain, observing a diamond ring on the finger of the corpse, said to one of the sailors, "You may just as well take that off; it can be of no use to

him now." The man tried to get it off, but the rigidity of the muscle after death, prevented his moving it. "He won't feel your knife, poor fellow," said the captain; "and a finger more or less, is no great matter to him now: off with it."

The sailor began to saw the finger joint with his knife, when down came a twenty-four pound shot, and with such a good direction, that it took the shoe off the man's foot, and the shovel out of the hand of another man.

"In with him, and cover him up!" said the captain.

We did so; when another shot, not quite so well directed as the first, threw the dirt in our faces, and ploughed the ground at our feet. The captain then ordered his men to run into the castle, which they instantly obeyed; while he himself walked leisurely along through a shower of musket-balls from those cursed Swiss dogs, whom I most fervently wished at the devil, because, as an aid-de-camp, I felt bound

in honour as well as duty to walk by the side of my captain, fully expecting every moment that a rifle-ball would have hit me where I should have been ashamed to shew the scar. I thought this funeral pace, after the funeral was over, confounded nonsense; but my fire-eating captain never had run away from a Frenchman, and did not intend to begin then.

I was behind him, making these reflections, and as the shot began to fly very thick, I stepped up alongside of him, and, by degrees, brought him between me and the fire. "Sir," said I, "as I am only a midshipman, I don't care so much about honour as you do; and, therefore, if it makes no difference to you, I'll take the liberty of getting under your lee." He laughed, and said, "I did not know you were here, for I meant you should have gone with the others; but, since you are out of your station, Mr. Mildmay, I will make that use of you which you so ingeniously proposed to make of me. My life may be of some importance

here; but yours very little, and another midshipman can be had from the ship only for asking: so just drop astern, if you please, and do duty as a breast-work for me!"

"Certainly, Sir," said I, "by all means;" and I took my station accordingly.

"Now," said the captain, "if you are '*doubled up*,' I will take you on my shoulders!"

I expressed myself exceedingly obliged, not only for the honour he had conferred on me, but also for that which he intended; but hoped I should have no occasion to trouble him.

Whether the enemy took pity on my youth and *innocence*, or whether they purposely missed us, I cannot say: I only know I was very happy when I found myself inside the castle with a whole skin, and should very readily have reconciled myself to any measure which would have restored me even to the comforts and conveniences of a man-of-war's cockpit. All human

enjoyment is comparative, and nothing ever convinced me of it so much and so forcibly as what took place at this memorable siege.

Fortune, and the well-known cowardice of the Spaniards, released me from this jeopardy; they surrendered the citadel, after which the castle was of no use, and we ran down to our boats as fast as we could: and notwithstanding the very assiduous fire of the watchful tirailleurs on the hill, we all got on board without accident.

There was one very singular feature in this affair. The Swiss mercenaries in the French and Spanish services, opposed to each other, behaved with the greatest bravery, and did their duty with unexceeded fidelity; but being posted so near, and coming so often in contact with each other, they would cry truce for a quarter of an hour, while they made inquiries after their mutual friends; often recognizing each other as fathers and sons, brothers and near relatives, fighting on opposite sides. They

would laugh and joke with each other, declare the truce at an end, then load their muskets, and take aim, with the same indifference, as regarded the object, as if they had been perfect strangers: but, as I before observed, fighting is a trade.

From Rosas we proceeded to join the admiral off Toulon; and being informed that a battery of six brass guns, in the port of Silva, would be in possession of the French in a few hours, we ran in, and anchored within pistol-shot of it. We lashed blocks to our lower mast-heads, rove hawsers through them, sent the ends on shore, made them fast to the guns, and hove off three of them, one after another, by the capstan; and had the end of the hauser on shore, ready for the others, when our marine videts were surprised by the French, driven in, and retreated to the beach with the loss of one man taken prisoner.

Not having sufficient force on shore to resist them, we re-embarked our party, and the French,

taking up a position behind the rocks, commenced a heavy fire of musquetry upon us. We answered it with the same; and now and then gave them a great gun; but they had the advantage of position, and wounded ten or eleven of our men from their elevated stations behind the rocks. At sun-set this ceased, when a boat came off from the shore, pulled by one Spaniard; he brought a letter for the captain, from the officer commanding the French detachment. It presented the French captain's compliments to ours; regretted the little interruption he had given to our occupation; remarked that the weather was cold, and as he had been ordered off in a hurry, he had not had time to provide himself; and as there was always a proper feeling among *brave gens*, requested a few gallons of rum for himself and followers.

This request was answered with a *polite note*, and the spirits required. The British captain hoped the commandant and his party would

make themselves comfortable, and have a *bon repos*. The captain, however, intended the Frenchman should pay for the spirits, though not in money, and sent in the bill about one o'clock in the morning.

All at that hour was as still as death; the French guard had refreshed themselves, and were enjoying the full extent of our captain's benediction, when he observed to us that it was a pity to lose the boat which was left on shore, as well as the other brass guns, and proposed making the attempt to bring off both. Five or six of us stripped, and lowering ourselves into the water, very gently swam ashore, in a breathless kind of silence, that would have done honour to a Pawnee Loup Indian. The water was very cold, and at first almost took away my respiration. We landed under the battery, and having first secured our boat without noise, we crept softly up to where the end of the hawsers lay by the side of the guns, to which we instantly

made them fast. About a dozen French soldiers were lying near, keeping watch, fast asleep.

We might easily have killed them all; but as we considered they were under the influence of our rum, we abhorred such a violation of hospitality. We helped ourselves, however, to most of the muskets that were near us, and very quietly getting into the boat, put off and rowed with two oars to the ship. The noise of the oars woke some of the soldiers, who, jumping up, fired at us with all the arms they had left; and I believe soon got a reinforcement, for they fired both quick and well; and, as it was starlight, and we were naked, our bodies were easily seen, so that the shot came very thick about us.

"Diving," said I, "is not running away;" so over we all went, except two. I was down like a porpoise, never rising till my head touched the ship's copper. I swam round the stern, and was taken in on the side opposite the enemy. My captain, I dare say, would have disdained

such a compromise; but though I was as proud as he was, I always thought, with Falstaff, that "discretion was the better part of valour," especially in a midshipman.

The men left in the boat got safe on board with her. The hands were all ready, and the moment our oars splashed in the water, they hove round cheerfully, and the guns came galloping down the rocks like young kangaroos. They were soon under water, and long before the Frenchmen could get a cut at the hawsers. They then fired at them with their muskets, in hopes of stranding the rope, but they failed in that also. We secured the guns on board, and before daylight got under weigh, and made sail for the fleet, which we joined shortly afterwards.

I here learned that my own ship had fought a gallant action with an enemy's frigate, had taken her opponent, but had suffered so much that she was ordered home for repairs, and had sailed for England from Gibraltar.

I had letters of introduction to the rear-

admiral, who was second in command; and I thought, under these circumstances, the best thing I could do would be to "clean myself," as the phrase used to be in those days, and go on board and present them. I went accordingly, and saw the flag captain, who took my letters in to the admiral, and brought out a verbal, and not a very civil message, saying, I might join the ship, if I pleased, until my own returned to the station. As it happened to suit my convenience, I *did* please; and the manner in which the favour was conferred disburthened my mind of any incumbrance of gratitude. The reception was not such as I might have expected: had the letters not been from people of distinction, and friends of the rear-admiral, I should much have preferred remaining in the frigate, whose captain also wished it, but that was not allowed.

To the flag-ship, therefore, I came; and why I was brought here I never could discover, unless it was for the purpose of completing a

menagerie, for I found between sixty and seventy midshipmen already assembled. They were mostly youngsters, followers of the rear-admiral, and had seen very little, if any, service, and I had seen a great deal for the time I had been afloat. Listening eagerly to my "yarns," the youthful ardour of these striplings kindled, and they longed to emulate my deeds. The consequence was, numerous applications from the midshipmen to be allowed to join the frigates on the station; not one was contented in the flag-ship; and the captain having discovered that I was the tarantula who had bitten them, hated me accordingly, and not a jot more than I hated him.

The captain was a very large, ill-made, broad-shouldered man, with a lack-lustre eye, a pair of thick lips, and a very unmeaning countenance. He wore a large pair of epaulettes; he was irritable in his temper; and when roused, which was frequent, was always violent and overbearing. His voice was like thunder, and when he

launched out on the poor midshipmen, they reminded me of the trembling bird which, when fascinated by the eye of the snake, loses its powers, and falls at once into the jaws of the monster. When much excited, he had a custom of shaking his shoulders up and down, and his epaulettes, on these occasions, flapped like the huge ears of a trotting elephant. At the most distant view of his person or sound of his voice, every midshipman, not obliged to remain, fled, like the land-crabs on a West-India beach. He was incessantly taunting me, was sure to find some fault or other with me, and sneeringly called me "one of your frigate midshipmen."

Irritated by this unjust treatment, I one day answered that I *was* a frigate midshipman, and hoped I could do my duty as well as any line-of-battle-ship midshipman, of my own standing, in the service. For this injudicious, and rather impertinent remark, I was ordered aft on the quarter-deck, and the captain went in to the admiral, and asked permission to flog me; but

the admiral refused, observing, that he did not admire the system of flogging young gentlemen: and, moreover, that in the present instance he saw no reason for it. So I escaped; but I led a sad life of it, and often did I pray for the return of my own ship.

Among other exercises of the fleet, we used always to reef topsails at sun-set, and this was usually done by all the ships at the same moment, waiting the signal from the admiral to begin; in this exercise there was much foolish rivalry, and very serious accidents, as well as numerous punishments, took place, in consequence of one ship trying to excel another. On these occasions our captain would bellow and foam at the mouth like a mad bull, up and down the quarter-deck.

One fine evening the signal was made, the topsails lowered and the men laying out on the yards, when a poor fellow from the main-topsail-yard fell, in his trying to lay out; and, striking his shoulder against the main channels, broke his

arm. I saw he was disabled, and could not swim; and, perceiving him sinking, I darted overboard, and held him until a boat came and picked us up; as the water was smooth, and there was little wind, and the ship not going more than two miles an hour, I incurred little risk.

When I came on deck I found the captain fit for Bedlam, because the accident had delayed the topsails going to the mast head quite as quick as the rest of the fleet. He threatened to flog the man for falling overboard, and ordered me off the quarter-deck. This was great injustice to both of us. Of all the characters I ever met with, holding so high a rank in the service, this man was the most unpleasant.

Shortly after we were ordered to Minorca to refit; here, to my great joy, I found my own ship, and I "shook the dust off my feet," and quitted the flag with a light heart. During the time I had been on board, the admiral had never said, "How do ye do?" to me—nor did he say,

"Good bye," when I quitted. Indeed, I should have left the ship without ever having been honoured with his notice, if it had not happened that a favourite pointer of his was a shipmate of mine. I recollect hearing of a man who boasted that the king had spoken to him; and when it was asked what he had said, replied, "He desired me to get out of his way."

My intercourse with the admiral was about as friendly and flattering. Pompey and I were on the poop. I presented him with a piece of hide to gnaw, by way of pastime. The admiral came on the poop, and seeing Pompey thus employed, asked who gave him that piece of hide? The yeoman of the signals said it was me. The admiral shook his long spy-glass at me, and said, "By G—, Sir, if ever you give Pompey a bit of hide again, I will flog you."

This is all I have to say of the admiral, and all the admiral ever said to me.

CHAPTER VIII.

> Since laws were made for every degree,
> I wonder we haven't better company on Tyburn tree.
>
> BEGGAR'S OPERA.

WHILE I was on board of this ship two poor men were executed for mutiny. The scene was far more solemn to me than any thing I had ever beheld. Indeed it was the first thing of the kind I had been present at. When we hear of executions on shore, we are always prepared to read of some foul atrocious crime, some unprovoked and unmitigated offence against the laws of civilized society, which a just and a merciful

government cannot allow to pass unpunished. With us at sea there are many shades of difference; but that which the law of our service considers a serious offence, is often no more than an ebullition of local and temporary feeling, which in some cases might be curbed, and in others totally suppressed by timely firmness and conciliation.

The ships had been a long time at sea, the enemy did not appear—and there was no chance either of bringing him to action, or of returning into port. Indeed nothing can be more dull and monotonous than a blockading cruize "in the team," as we call it; that is, the ships of the line stationed to watch an enemy. The frigates have, in this respect, every advantage; they are always employed on shore, often in action, and the more men they have killed, the happier are the survivors. Some melancholy ferment on board of the flag ship I was in, caused an open mutiny. Of course it was very soon quelled; and the ringleaders having been tried by a court-

martial, two of them were condemned to be hanged at the yard-arm of their own ship, and were ordered for execution on the following day but one.

Our courts-martial are always arrayed in the most pompous manner, and certainly are calculated to strike the mind with awe—even of a captain himself. A gun is fired at eight o'clock in the morning from the ship where it is to be held, and a union flag is displayed at the mizen peak. If the weather be fine, the ship is arranged with the greatest nicety; her decks are as white as snow—her hammocks are stowed with care—her ropes are taut—her yards square—her guns run out—and a guard of marines, under the orders of a lieutenant, prepared to receive every member of the court with the honour due to his rank. Before nine o'clock they are all assembled; the officers in their undress uniform, unless an admiral is to be tried. The great cabin is prepared, with a long table

covered with a green cloth. Pens, ink, paper, prayer books, and the articles of war, are laid round to every member.

"Open the court," says the president.

The court is opened, and officers and men, indiscriminately stand round. The prisoners are now brought in under the charge of the provost martial, a master-at-arms, with his sword drawn, and placed at the foot of the table, on the left hand of the judge-advocate. The court is sworn to do its duty impartially, and if there is any doubt, to let it go in favour of the prisoner. Having done this, the members sit down, covered, if they please.

The judge-advocate is then sworn, and the order for the court-martial read. The prisoner is put on his trial: if he says any thing to commit himself, the court stops him, and kindly observes, "We do not want your evidence against yourself; we want only to know what others can prove against you." The unfortunate man is offered any assistance he may require; and

when the defence is over, the court is cleared, the doors are shut, and the minutes which have been taken down by the judge-advocate, are carefully read over, the credibility of the witnesses weighed, and the president puts the question to the youngest member first, "Proved, or not proved?"

All having given their answer, if seven are in favour of proved, and six against, proved is recorded. The next question—if for mutiny or desertion, or other capital crime—"Flogging or death?" The votes are given in the same way: if the majority be for death, the judge-advocate writes the sentence, and it is signed by all the members, according to seniority beginning with the president, and ending with the judge-advocate.

The court is now opened again, the prisoner brought in, and an awful and deep silence prevails. The members of the court all put their hats on, and are seated; every one else, except the provost-martial, is uncovered. As soon as

the judge-advocate has read the sentence, the prisoners are delivered to the custody of the provost-martial, by a warrant from the president, and he has charge of them till the time for the execution of the sentence.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, I received a message from one of the prisoners, saying, he wished much to speak with me. I followed the master-at-arms down to the screened cabin, in the gun-room, where the men were confined with their legs in irons. These irons consist of one long bar and a set of shackles. The shackles fit the small part of the leg, just above the ancle; and, having an eye on each end of them, they receive the leg. The end of the bar is then passed through, and secured with a padlock. I found the poor fellows sitting on a shot-box. Their little meal lay before them untouched; one of them cried bitterly; the other, a man of the name of Strange, possessed a great deal of equanimity, although evidently deeply affected. This man had been pretty well educated in

youth, but having taken a wild and indolent turn, had got into mischief, and to save himself from a severe chastisement, had run away from his friends, and entered on board a man-of-war. In this situation he had found time, in the intervals of duty, to read and to think; he became, in time, sullen, and separated himself from the occasional merriment of his messmates; and it is not improbable that this moody temper had given rise to the mutinous acts for which he was to suffer.

This man now apologized for the liberty he had taken, and said he would not detain me long.

"You see, Sir," said he, "that my poor friend is quite overcome with the horror of his situation; nor do I wonder at it. He is very different from the hardened malefactors that are executed on shore; we are neither of us afraid to die: but such a death as this, Mr. Mildmay —to be hung up like dogs, an example to the fleet, and a shame and reproach to our friends—

this wrings our hearts! It is this consideration, and to save the feelings of my poor mother, that I have sent for you. I saw you jump overboard to save a poor fellow from drowning; so I thought you would not mind doing a good turn for another unfortunate sailor. I have made my will, and appointed you my executor; and with this power of attorney you will receive all my pay and prize-money, which I will thank you to give to my dear mother, whose address you will find written here. My motive for this is, that she may never learn the history of my death. You can tell her that I died for my country's good, which is very true, for I acknowledge the justice of my sentence, and own that a severe example is wanting. It is eleven years since I was in England; I have served faithfully the whole of that time; nor did I ever misbehave except in this one instance. I think if our good king knew my sad story, he would be merciful: but God's will be done! Yet, if I had a wish, it would be that

the enemy's fleet would come out, and that I might die, as I have lived, defending my country. But, Mr. Mildmay, I have one very important question to ask you—do you believe that there is such a thing as a future state?"

"Most surely," said I; "though we all live as if we believed there was no such thing: but why do you doubt it?"

"Because," said the poor fellow, "when I was an officer's servant, I was one day tending the table in the wardroom, and I heard the commander of a sloop of war, who was dining there with his son, say that it was all nonsense—that there was no future state, and the Bible was a heap of lies. I have never been happy since."

I told him that I was extremely sorry that any officer should have used such expressions at all, particularly before him; that I was incapable of restoring his mind to its proper state; but that I should recommend his immediately sending for the chaplain, who, I had no doubt,

would give him all the comfort he could desire. He thanked me for this advice, and profited by it, as he assured me in his last moments.

"And now, Sir," said he, "let me give *you* a piece of advice. When you are a captain, as I am very sure you will be, do not worry your men into mutiny by making what is called a smart ship. Cleanliness and good order are what seamen like; but niggling, polishing, scraping iron bars, and ring-bolts, and the like of that, a sailor dislikes more than a flogging at the gangway. If, in reefing topsails, you happen to be a minute later than another ship, never mind it, so long as your sails are well reefed, and fit to stand blowing weather. Many a sail is split by bad reefing, and many a good sailor has lost his life by that foolish hurry which has done incredible harm in the navy. What can be more cruel or unjust than to flog the last man off the yard? seeing that he is necessarily the most active, and cannot get in without the imminent danger of breaking his neck; and,

moreover, that one man *must* be last. Depend upon it, Sir, 'that nothing is well done which is done in a hurry.' But I have kept you too long. God bless you, Sir; remember my poor mother, and be sure you meet me on the forecastle to-morrow morning."

The fatal morning came. It was eight o'clock. The gun fired—the signal for punishment flew at our mast-head. The poor men gave a deep groan, exclaiming, "Lord have mercy upon us!—our earthly career and troubles are nearly over!" The master-at-arms came in, unlocked the padlock at the end of the bars, and, slipping off the shackles, desired the marine sentinels to conduct the prisoners to the quarter-deck.

Here was a scene of solemnity which I hardly dare attempt to describe. The day was clear, and beautiful; the top-gallant yards were crossed on board of all the ships; the colours were flying; the crews were all dressed in white trowsers and blue jackets, and hung in clusters,

like bees, on the side of the rigging facing our ship; a guard of marines, under arms, was placed along each gangway, but on board of our ship they were on the quarter-deck. Two boats from each ship lay off upon their oars along-side of us, with a lieutenant's and a corporal's guard in each, with fixed bayonets. The hands were all turned up by the boatswain and his mates with a shrill whistle, and calling down each hatchway, "All hands attend punishment!"

You now heard the quick trampling of feet up the ladders, but not a word was spoken. The prisoners stood on the middle of the quarter-deck, while the captain read the sentence of the court-martial and the order from the commander-in-chief for the execution. The appropriate prayers and psalms having been read by the chaplain, with much feeling and devotion, the poor men were asked if they were ready; they both replied in the affirmative, but each requested to have a glass of wine, which was

instantly brought. They drank it off, bowing most respectfully to the captain and officers.

The admiral did not appear, it not being etiquette; but the prisoners desired to be kindly and gratefully remembered to him: they then begged to shake hands with the captain and all the officers, which having done, they asked permission to address the ship's company. The captain ordered them all to come aft on the top and quarter-deck. The most profound silence reigned, and there was not an eye but had a tear in it.

William Strange, the man who had sent for me, then said, in a clear and audible tone of voice, " Brother sailors, attend to the last words of a dying man. We are brought here at the instigation of some of you who are now standing in safety among the crowd; you have made fools of us, and we are become the victims to the just vengeance of the laws. Had you succeeded in the infamous design you contemplated, what would have been the consequences? Ruin,

eternal ruin, to yourselves and to your families; a disgrace to your country, and the scorn of those foreigners to whom you proposed delivering up the ship. Thank God you did not succeed. Let our fate be a warning to you; and endeavour to shew by your future acts your deep contrition for the past. Now, Sir," turning to the captain, "we are ready."

This beautiful speech from the mouth of a common sailor must as much astonish the reader as it then did the captain and officers of the ship. But Strange, as I have shewn, was no common man; he had had the advantage of education, and, like many of the ringleaders at the mutiny of the Nore, was led into the error of refusing to *obey*, from the conscious feeling that he was born to *command*.

The arms of the prisoners were then pinioned, and the chaplain led the way, reading the funeral service; the master-at-arms, with two marine sentinels, conducted them along the starboard gangway to the forecastle; here a stage was

erected on either side, over the cathead, with steps to ascend to it; a tail block was attached to the boom iron, at the outer extremity of each fore-yard-arm, and through this a rope was rove, one end of which came down to the stage. The other was led along the yard into the catharpings, and thence down upon the main-deck. A gun was primed and ready to fire, on the fore part of the ship, directly beneath the scaffold.

I attended poor Strange to the very last moment; he begged me to see that the halter, which was a piece of line, like a clothes' line, was properly made fast round his neck, for he had known men suffer dreadfully from the want of this precaution. A white cap was placed on the head of each man, and when both mounted the platform, the cap was drawn over their eyes. They shook hands with me, with their messmates, and with the chaplain, assuring him that they died happy, and confident in the hopes of redemption. They then stood still while the yard ropes were fixed to the halter by a toggle

in the running noose of the latter; the other end of the yard-ropes were held by some twenty or thirty men on each side of the main-deck, where two lieutenants of the ship attended.

All being ready, the captain waved a white handkerchief, the gun fired, and in an instant the poor fellows were seen swinging at either yard-arm. They had on blue jackets and white trowsers, and were remarkably fine-looking young men. They did not appear to suffer any pain, and at the expiration of an hour, the bodies were lowered down, placed in coffins, and sent on shore for interment

On my arrival in England, nine months after, I acquitted myself of my promise, and paid to the mother of William Strange upwards of fifty pounds, for pay and prize-money. I told the poor woman that her son had died a christian, and had fallen for the good of his country; and having said this, I took a hasty leave, for fear she should ask questions.

That the execution of a man on board of a

ship of war does not always produce a proper effect upon the minds of the younger boys, the following fact may serve to prove.

There were two little fellows on board the ship; one was the son of the carpenter, the other of the boatswain. They were both of them surprised and interested at the sight, but not proportionably shocked. The next day I was down in one of the wings, reading by the light of a purser's dip—*vulgo*, a farthing candle, when these two boys came sliding down the main hatchway by one of the cables. Whether they saw me, and thought I would not 'peach, or whether they supposed I was asleep, I cannot tell; but they took their seats on the cables, in the heart of the tier, and for some time appeared to be in earnest conversation. They had some articles folded up in a dirty check shirt and pocket handkerchief; they looked up at the battens, to which the hammocks are suspended, and producing a long rope yarn, tried to pass it over one of them; but unable

to reach, one boy climbed on the back of the other, and effected two purposes, by reeving one end of the line, and bringing it down to the cables again. They next unrolled the shirt, and, to my surprise, took out the boatswain's kitten, about three months old; its fore paws were tied behind its back, its hind feet were tied together, and a fishing lead attached to them: a piece of white rag was tied over its head as a cap.

It was now pretty evident what the fate of poor puss was likely to be, and why the lead was made fast to her feet. The rope yarn was tied round her neck; they each shook one of her paws, and pretended to cry. One of the urchins held in his hand a fife, into which he poured as much flour as it would hold, out of the handkerchief, the other held the end of the rope-yarn: every ceremony was gone through that they could think of.

"Are you ready?" said the executioner, or he that held the line.

"All ready," replied the boy with the fife.

"Fire the gun!" said the hangman.

The boy applied one end of the fife to his mouth, blew out all the flour, and in this humble imitation of the smoke of a gun poor puss was run up to the batten, where she hung till she was dead. I am ashamed to say I did not attempt to save the kitten's life, although I caused her foul murder to be revenged by the *cat*.

After the body had hung a certain time, they took it down, and buried it in the shot-locker; this was an indictable offence, as the smell would have proved, so I lodged the information; the body was found, and as the facts were clear, the law took its course, to the great amusement of the bystanders, who saw the brats tied upon a gun, and well flogged.

The boatswain eat the kitten, first, he said, because he had "*larned*" to eat cats in Spain; secondly, because she had *not* died a natural death (I thought otherwise); and his last

reason was more singular than either of the others: he had seen a picture in a church in Spain, of Peter's vision of the animals let down in the sheet, and there was a cat among them: observing an alarm of scepticism in my eye, he thought proper to confirm his assertion with an oath.

"Might it not have been a rabbit?" said I.

"Rabbit! Sir; d—n me, think I didn't know a cat from a rabbit? Why one has got short ears and long tail, and t'other has got *wicee wersee*, as we calls it."

A grand carnival masquerade was to be given at Minorca in honour of the English, and the place chosen for the exhibition was a church; all which was perfectly consistent with the Romish faith. I went in the character of a fool, and met many brother officers there. It was a comical sight to see the anomalous groups stared at by the pictures of the Virgin Mary and all the saints, whose shrines were lit up for the occasion with wax tapers. The admiral,

rear admiral, and most of the captains and officers of the fleet were present; the place was about a mile from the town.

Having hired a fool's dress, I mounted that very appropriate animal—a donkey, and set off amidst the shouts of a thousand dirty vagabonds. On my arrival, I began to shew off in summersaults, leaps, and all kinds of practical jokes. The manner in which I supported the character drew a little crowd around me. I never spoke to an admiral or captain unless he addressed me first; and then I generally sold him a bargain. Being very well acquainted with the domestic economy of the ships on the station, a martinet asked me if I would enter for his ship. "No," said I, "you would give me three dozen for not lashing up my hammock properly." "Come with me," said another: "No," said I, "your bell-rope is too short—you cannot reach it to order another bottle of wine before all the officers have left your table." Another promised me kind treatment and plenty of wine.

"No," said I; "in your ship I should be coals at Newcastle; besides, your coffee is too weak, your steward only puts one ounce into six cups."

These hits afforded a good deal of mirth among the crowd, and even the admiral himself honoured me with a smile. I bowed respectfully to his lordship, who merely said—"What do you want of me, fool?" "Oh, nothing at all, my lord," said I; "I have only a small favour to ask of you." "What is that?" said the admiral. "Only to make me a captain, my lord." "Oh, no," said the admiral, "we never make fools captains." "No!" said I, clapping my arms akimbo, in a very impertinent manner; "then that, I suppose, is a new regulation. How long has the order in council been out?"

The good humoured old chief laughed heartily at this piece of impertinence; but the captain, whose ship I had so recently quitted, was silly enough to be offended: he found me out, and

went and complained of me to my captain the next day; but my captain only laughed at him, said he thought it an excellent joke, and invited me to dinner.

Our ship was ordered to Gibraltar, where we arrived soon after; and a packet coming in from England, I received letters from my father, announcing the death of my dearest mother. O how I then regretted all the sorrows I had ever caused her; how incessantly did busy memory haunt me with all my misdeeds, and recal to mind the last moment I had seen her! I never supposed I could have regretted her half so much. My father stated that in her last moments she had expressed the greatest solicitude for my welfare. She feared the career of life on which I had entered would not conduce to my eternal welfare, however much it might promise to my temporal advantage. Her dying injunctions to me were, never to forget the moral and religious principles in which she had brought me up; and,

with her last blessing, implored me to read my Bible, and take it as my guide through life.

My father's letter was both an affecting and forcible appeal; and never, in the whole course of my subsequent life, were my feelings so worked upon as they were on that occasion. I went to my hammock with an aching head and an almost broken heart. A retrospection of my life afforded me no comfort. The numerous acts of depravity or pride, of revenge or deceit, of which I had been guilty, rushed through my mind, as the tempest through the rigging, and called me to the most serious and melancholy reflections. It was some time before I could collect my thoughts and analyze my feelings; but when I recalled all my misdeeds—my departure from that path of virtue, so often and so clearly laid down by my affectionate parent—I was overwhelmed with grief, shame, and repentance. I considered how often I had been on the brink of eternity; and

had I been cut off in my sins, what would have been my destiny? I started with horror at the danger I had escaped, and looked forward with gloomy apprehension at those that still awaited me. I sought in vain, among all my actions since I left my mother's care, one single deed of virtue, one that sprang from a good motive. There was, it is true, an outward gloss and polish for the world to look at; but all was dark within: and I felt that a keener eye than that of mortality was searching my soul, where deception was worse than useless.

At twelve o'clock, before I had once closed my eyes, I was called to relieve the deck, having what is called the middle watch, *i. e.* from midnight till four in the morning. We had, the day before, buried a quarter-master, nick-named Quid, an old seaman who had destroyed himself by drinking—no very uncommon case in his majesty's service. The corpse of a man who has destroyed his inside by intemperance is

generally in a state of putridity immediately after death; and the decay, particularly in warm climates, is very rapid. A few hours after Quid's death, the body emitted certain effluvia denoting the necessity of immediate interment. It was accordingly sewn up in a hammock; and as the ship lay in deep water, with a current sweeping round the bay, and the boats being at the same time all employed at the dock-yard, the first-lieutenant caused shot to be tied to the feet, and, having read the funeral service, launched the body overboard from the gangway, as the ship lay at anchor.

I was walking the deck, in no very happy state of mind, reflecting seriously on parts of that Bible which for more than two years I had never looked into, when my thoughts were called to the summons which poor Quid had received, and the beauty of the funeral service which I had heard read over him—"I am the resurrection and the life." The moon, which had been obscured, suddenly burst from a

cloud, and a cry of horror proceeded from the look-out man on the starboard gangway. I ran to inquire the cause, and found him in such a state of nervous agitation that he could only say, "Quid-- Quid!" and point with his finger into the water.

I looked over the side, and, to my amazement, there was the body of Quid,

"All in dreary hammock shrouded,"

perfectly upright, and floating with the head and shoulders above water! A slight undulation of the waves gave it the appearance of nodding its head; while the rays of the moon enabled us to trace the remainder of the body underneath the surface. For a few moments, I felt a horror which I cannot describe, and contemplated the object in awful silence; while my blood ran cold, and I felt a sensation as if my hair was standing on end. I was completely taken by surprise, and thought the body had risen up to warn

me; but in a few seconds I regained my presence of mind, and I soon perceived the origin of this re-appearance of the corpse. I ordered the cutter to be manned, and, in the mean time, went down to inform the first-lieutenant of what had occurred. He laughed, and said, "I suppose the old boy finds salt water not quite so palatable as grog. Tie some more shot to his feet, and bring the old fellow to his moorings again. Tell him, the next time he trips his anchor, not to run on board of us. He had his regular allowance of prayer: I gave him the whole service, and I shall not give him any more." So saying, he went to sleep again.

This apparently singular circumstance is easily accounted for. Bodies decomposing from putridity, generate a quantity of gas, which swells them up to an enormous size, and renders them buoyant. The body of this man was thrown overboard just as decomposition was in progress: the shot made fast to the feet were sufficient to sink it at the time; but

in a few hours after were not competent to keep it at the bottom, and it came up to the surface in that perpendicular position which I have described. The current in the bay being at the time either slack or irregular, it floated at the spot whence it had been launched into the water.

The cutter, being manned, was sent with more shot to attach to the body, and sink it. When they attempted to hold it with the boat-hook, it eluded the touch, turning round and round, or bobbing under the water, and coming up again, as if in sport: but accident saved them any further trouble; for the bowman, reproached by the boat's crew for not hooking the body, got angry, and darting the spike of the boat-hook into the abdomen, the pent-up gas escaped with a loud whiz, and the corpse instantly sank like a stone. Many jokes were passed on the occasion; but I was not in humour for joking on serious subjects; and before the watch was out I had made up my

mind to go home, and to quit the service, as I found I had no chance of obeying my mother's dying injunctions if I remained where I was.

The next morning I stated my wishes to the captain, not of quitting the service, but of going home in consequence of family arrangements. This was about as necessary as that I should make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The captain had been told of the unpleasant news I had received, and having listened to all I had to say, he replied, that if I could make up my mind to remain with him it would be better for me.

"You are now," said he, "accustomed to my ways—you know your duty, and do your work well; indeed, I have made honourable mention of you to the Admiralty in my public letter: you know your own business best" (here he was mistaken—he ought not to have parted with me for the reasons which I offered); "but my advice to you is to stay."

I thanked him—but being bent and determined on going home, he acceded to my request;

gave me my discharge, and added a very handsome certificate of good conduct, far beyond the usually prescribed form; he also told me that if I chose to return to him he would keep a vacancy for me. I parted with the officers, my messmates, and the ship's company with regret. I had been more than three years with them; and my stormy commencement had settled down into a quiet and peaceful acknowledgment of my supremacy in the birth; my qualities were such as to make me a universal favorite, and I was followed down the ship's side with the hearty good wishes of all. I was pulled in the cutter on board of a ship of the line, in which I was ordered to take my passage to England.

CHAPTER IX.

How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away!

Beggar's Opera.

Hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. If so, it has a much better pavement than it deserves; for "the trail of the serpent is over us all." Then why send to hell the greatest proof of our perfection before the fall, and of weakness subsequent to it? Honest and sincere professions of amendment must carry with them to the throne of grace a strong recommendation, even if we are again led astray

by the allurements of sense and the snares of the world. At least, our tears of contrition and repentance, our sorrow for the past, and our firm resolves for the future, must have given "joy in heaven," and consequently cannot have been converted into pavement for the infernal regions.

Pleasure and pain, in youth, are, for the most part, transient impressions, whether they arise from possession or loss of worldly enjoyment, or from a sense of having done well or ill in our career. The excitement, though strong, is not durable; and thus it was with me. I had not been more than four days on board the ship of the line in which I took my passage to England, when I felt my spirits buoyant, and my levity almost amounting to delirium. The hours of reflection were at first shortened, and then dismissed entirely. The general mirth of my new shipmates, at the thoughts of once more revisiting their dear native land—the anticipation of indulging in the sensual worship

of Bacchus and Venus, the constant theme of discourse among the midshipmen ; the loud and senseless applause bestowed on the coarsest ribaldry—these all had their share in destroying that religious frame of mind in which I had parted with my first captain, and seemed to awaken me to a sense of the folly I had been guilty of in quitting a ship, where I was not only at the head of my mess, but in the fair way for promotion. I considered that I had acted the part of a madman, and had again begun to renew my career of sin and of folly, a little, and but a little, sobered by the recent event.

We arrived in England after the usual passage from the Rock. I consented to pass two days at Portsmouth, with my new companions, to revisit our old haunts, and to commit those excesses which fools and knaves applauded and partook of, at my expense, leaving me full leisure to repent, after we separated. I, however, did muster resolution enough to pack my

trunk; and, after an extravagant supper at the Fountain, retired to bed intoxicated, and the next morning, with an aching head, threw myself into the coach and drove off for London. A day of much hilarity is generally succeeded by one of depression. This is fair and natural; we draw too largely on our stock, and squander our enjoyment like our money, leaving us the next day with low spirits and a lower purse.

A stupid dejection succeeded the boisterous mirth of the over-night. I slumbered in a corner of the coach till about one o'clock, when we reached Godalming, where I alighted, took a slight refreshment, and resumed my seat. As we drove along, I had more leisure, and was in a fitter frame of mind to review my past conduct since I had quitted my ship at Gibraltar. My self-examination, as usual, produced no satisfactory results. I perceived that the example of bad company had swept away every trace of good resolution which I had made on the death of my mother. I saw, with grief, that I had no dependance on

myself; I had forgotten all my good intentions, and the firm vows of amendment with which I had bound myself, and had yielded to the first temptation which came in my way.

In vain did I call up every black and threatening cloud of domestic sorrow, which was to meet me on my return home—the dreadful vacuum occasioned by my mother's death—the grief of my father—my brother and sisters in deep mourning, and the couch on which I had left the best of parents, when I turned away my thoughtless head from her in the anguish of her grief. I renewed my promises of amendment, and felt some secret consolation in doing so.

When I arrived at my father's door, the servant who let me in, greeted me with a loud and hearty welcome. I ran into the drawing-room, where I found that my brothers and sisters had a party of children to spend the evening with them. They were dancing to the music of a piano, played on by my aunt, while my father sat in his arm chair, in high good humour.

This was a very different scene from what I had expected. I was prepared for a sentimental and affecting meeting; and my feelings were all worked up to their full bearing for the occasion. Judge, then, of the sudden revulsion in my mind, when I found mirth and good humour where I expected tears and lamentations. It had escaped my recollection, that although the death of my mother was an event new to me, it had happened six months before I had heard of it; and, consequently, with them grief had given way to time. I was astonished at their apparent want of feeling; while they gazed with surprise at the sight of me, and the symbols of woe displayed in my equipment.

My father welcomed me with surprise; asked where my ship was, and what had brought her home. The fact was, that in my sudden determination to return to England, I had spared myself the trouble of writing to make known my intentions; and, indeed, if I had written, I should have arrived as soon as my letter, unless

(which I ought to have done), I had written on my arrival at Portsmouth, instead of throwing away my time in the very worst species of dissipation. Unable, therefore, in the presence of many witnesses, to give my father that explanation which he had a right to expect, I suffered greatly for a time in his opinion. He very naturally supposed that some disgraceful conduct on my part was the cause of my sudden return. His brow became clouded and his mind seemed occupied with deep reflection.

This behaviour of my father, together with the continued noisy mirth of my brothers and sisters, gave me considerable pain. I felt as if, in the sad news of my mother's death, I had over-acted my part in the feeling I had shewn, and the sacrifice I had made in quitting my ship. On explaining to my father, in private, the motives of my conduct, I was not successful. He could not believe that my mother's death was the sole cause of my return to England. I stood many firm and angry

interrogations as to the possible good which could accrue to me by quitting my ship. I shewed him the captain's handsome certificate, which only mortified him the more. In vain did I plead my excess of feeling. He replied with an argument that I feel to have been unanswerable—that I had quitted my ship when on the very pinnacle of favour, and in the road to fortune. "And what," said he, "is to become of the navy and the country, if every officer is to return home when he receives the news of the death of a relation?"

In proportion as my father's arguments carried conviction, they did away, at the same time, all the good impressions of my mother's dying injunction. If her death was a matter of so little importance, her last words were equally so; and from that moment I ceased to think of either. My father's treatment of me was now very different from what it had ever been during my mother's life-time. My requests

were harshly refused, and I was lectured more as a child than as a lad of *eighteen*, who had seen much of the world.

Coldness on his part, was met by a spirit of resistance on mine. Pride came in to my assistance. A dispute arose one evening, at the finale of which I gave him to understand that if I could not live quietly under his roof, I would quit it. He calmly recommended me to do so. Little supposing that I should have taken his advice, I left the room, banging the door after me, packed up a few changes of linen, and took my departure, unperceived by any one, with my bundle on my shoulder, and about sixteen shillings in my pocket.

Here was great mismanagement on the part of my father, and still greater on mine. He was anxious to get me afloat again, and I had no sort of objection to going; but his impatience and my pride spoiled all. Reflection soon came to me, but came too late. Night was

fast approaching: I had no house over my head, and my exchequer was in no very flourishing condition.

I had walked six miles from my father's house, when I began to tire. It became dark, and I had no fixed plan. A gentleman's carriage came by; I took up a position in the rear of it, and had ridden four miles, when, as the carriage was slowly dragging up a hill, I was discovered by the parties inside; and the postilion, who had dismounted and been informed of it, saluted me with two or three smart cuts with his whip, intimating that I was of no use, but rather an incumbrance which could be dispensed with.

My readers know that I had long since adopted the motto of our northern neighbours, *nemo me*, &c.; so waiting very quietly till the driver had mounted his horses, at the top of the hill, that he might be more at my mercy, I discharged a stone at his head which caused him to vacate his seat, and fall under his horse's belly. The

animals, frightened at his fall, turned short round to the right, or they would have gone over him, and ran furiously down the hill. The post-boy, recovering his legs, followed his horses without bestowing a thought on the author of the mischief; and I made all the haste I could in the opposite direction, perfectly indifferent as to the fate of the parties inside of the carriage, for I still smarted with the blows I had received.

"Fools and unkind," muttered I, looking back, as they disappeared at the bottom of the hill, with frightful velocity, "you are rightly served. I was a trespasser, 'tis true, but a civil request would have had all the effect you required—that of inducing me to get down; but a whip to me—" And with my blood still boiling at the recollection, I hastily pursued my journey.

In a few minutes I reached the little town of ———, the lights of which were visible at the time the horses had turned down the hill and ran away. Entering the first inn I came to, I found

the large room below occupied by a set of strolling players, who had just returned from a successful performance of Romeo and Juliet; and, from the excitement among them, it was easy to perceive that their success had been fully equal to their expectations. They were fourteen in number, seated round a table, not indifferently covered with the good things of this life; they were clad in theatrical costume, which, with the rapid circulation of the bottle, gave the whole scene an air of romantic freedom calculated to interest the mind of a thoughtless half-pay midshipman.

Being hungry after my walk, I determined to join the party at supper, which, being a *table d'hôte*, was easily effected. One of the actresses, a sweet little, well-proportioned creature, with large black eyes, was receiving, with apparent indifference, the compliments of the better sort of bumpkins and young farmers of the neighbourhood. In her momentary and occasional smiles, she discovered a beautiful set of small,

white teeth; but when she resumed her pensive attitude, I was sensible of an enchanting air of melancholy, which deeply interested me in favour of this poor girl, who was evidently in a lower situation in life than that for which she had been educated. The person who sat nearest to her, vacated his seat as soon as he found his attentions were thrown away. I instantly took possession of the place, and, observing the greatest respect, entered at once into conversation with her.

Whether she was pleased with my address and language, as being superior to what she was usually compelled to listen to, or whether she was flattered by my assiduous attention, I know not; but she gradually unbent, and became more animated; shewing great natural talent and a highly cultivated mind; so that I was every moment more astonished to find her in such a situation.

Our conversation had lasted a considerable time; and I had just made a remark,

to which she had not replied, apparently struggling with concealed emotion, when we were interrupted by a carriage driving up to the door, and cries of "Help! help!" I instantly quitted the side of my new acquaintance, and flew to answer the signal of distress.

A gentleman in the carriage was supporting a young lady in his arms, to all appearance lifeless. With my assistance, she was speedily removed into the house, and conveyed to a bed-room. A surgeon was sent for, but none was to be had. The only practitioner of the town being at that moment gone to attend one of those cases which, according to Mr. Malthus, are much too frequent for the good of the country. I discovered that the carriage had been overturned, and that the young lady had been insensible ever since.

There was no time to be lost; I knew that immediate bleeding was absolutely necessary. I had acquired thus much of surgical knowledge in the course of my professional duties. I

stated my opinion to the gentleman; and though my practice had been very slight, offered my services to perform the operation. This offer was accepted with thanks by the grateful father, for such I found he was. With my sharp penknife I opened a vein in one of the whitest arms I ever beheld. After a few moments chafing, the blood flowed more freely; the pulse indicated returning animation; a pair of large blue eyes opened suddenly upon me like a masked battery; and so alarmingly susceptible was I of the tender passion, that I quite forgot the little actress whom I had left at the supper-table, and who, a few minutes before, had occupied my whole thoughts and attention.

Having succeeded in restoring the fair patient to consciousness, I prescribed a warm bed, some tea, and careful watching. My orders were punctually obeyed; I then quitted the apartment of my patient, and began to ruminate over the hurried and singular events of the day.

I had scarcely had time to decide in my own mind on the respective merits of my two rival beauties, when the surgeon arrived; and, being ushered into the sick room, declared that the patient had been treated with skill, and that in all probability she owed her life to my presence of mind. "But, give me leave to ask," said the doctor, addressing the father, "how the accident happened?" The gentleman replied, that a scoundrel having got up behind the carriage, had been flogged off by the postilion; and in revenge, had thrown a stone, which knocked the driver off his horses: they took fright, turned round, and ran away down the hill towards their own stables; and after running five miles, upset the carriage against a post, "by which accident," said he, "my poor daughter was nearly killed."

"What a villain!" said the doctor.

"Villain, indeed," echoed I; and so I felt I was. I turned sick at the thoughts of what my ungoverned passion had done; and my regret

was not a little increased by the charms of my lovely victim; but I soon recovered from the shock, particularly when I saw that no suspicion attached to me. I therefore received the praises of the father and the doctor with a becoming modest diffidence; and, with a hearty shake of the hand from the grateful parent, was wished a good night, and retired to my bed.

As I stood before the looking-glass, laying my watch and exhausted purse on the dressing-table, and leisurely untying my cravat, I could not forbear a glance of approbation at what I thought a very handsome and a very impudent face: I soliloquized on the events of the day, and, as usual, found the summing-up very much against me. "This, then, Sir," said I, "is your road to repentance and reform. You insult your father; quit his house; get up, like a vagabond, behind a gentleman's carriage; are flogged off, break the ribs of an honest man, who has a wife and family to support out of his hard

earnings—are the occasion of a carriage being overturned, and very nearly cause the death of an amiable girl! And all this mischief in the short space of six hours, not to say a word of your intentions towards the little actress, which I presume are none of the most honourable. Where is all this to end?"

"At the gallows," said I, in reply to myself, "the more probably, too, as my finances have no means of improvement, except by a miracle or highway robbery. I am in love with two girls, and have only two clean shirts; consequently there is no proportion between the demand and the supply."

With this medley of reflections I fell asleep. I was awoke early by the swallows twittering at the windows; and the first question which was agitated in my brain was, what account I should give of myself to the father of the young lady, when interrogated by him, as I most certainly should be. I had my choice between truth and falsehood: the latter (such is the force of habit),

I think, carried it hollow; but I determined to leave that point to the spur of the moment, and act according to circumstances.

My meditations were interrupted by the chambermaid, who, tapping at my door, said she came to tell me, "that the gentleman that *belonged* to the young lady that I was so kind to, was waiting breakfast for me."

The thought of sitting at table with the dear creature whose brains I had so nearly spilled upon the road the night before, quite overcame me; and leaving the fabric of my history to chance or to inspiration, I darted from my bed-room to the parlour where the stranger awaited me. He received me with great cordiality, again expressed his obligations, and informed me that his name was Somerville, of ——.

I had some faint recollection of having heard the name mentioned by my father, and was endeavouring to recal to mind on what occasion, when Mr. Somerville interrupted me, by saying, that he hoped he should have the pleasure of

knowing the name of the young gentleman who had conferred such an obligation upon him. I answered that my name was Mildmay; for I had no time to tell a lie.

"I should be happy to think," said he, "that you were the son of my old friend and school-fellow, Mr. Mildmay, of ——; but that cannot well be," said he, "for he had only two sons—one at college, the other as brave a sailor as ever lived, and now in the Mediterranean; but perhaps you are some relation of his?"

He had just concluded this speech, and before I had time to reply to it, the door opened, and Miss Somerville entered. We have all heard a great deal about "love at first sight;" but I contend, that the man who would not, at the very first glimpse of Emily Somerville, have fallen desperately in love with her, could have had neither heart nor soul. If I thought her lovely when she lay in a state of insensibility, what did I think of her when her form had

assumed its wonted animation, and her cheeks their natural colour? To describe a perfect beauty never was my forte. I can only say, that Miss Somerville, as far as I am a judge, united in her person all the component parts of the finest specimen of her sex in England; and these were joined in such harmony by the skilful hand of Nature, that I was ready to kneel down and adore her.

As she extended her white hand to me, and thanked me for my kindness, I was so taken aback with the sudden appearance and address of this beautiful vision, that I knew not what to say. I stammered out something, but have no recollection whether it was French or English. I lost my presence of mind, and the blushes of conscious guilt on my face at that moment, might have been mistaken for those of unsophisticated innocence. That these external demonstrations are often confounded, and that such was the case on the present occasion, there

can be no doubt. My embarrassment was ascribed to that modesty ever attendant on real worth.

It has been said that true merit blushes at being discovered; but I have lived to see merit that could not blush, and the want of it that could, while the latter has marched off with all the honours due to the former. The blush that burned on my cheek, at that moment, would have gone far to have condemned a criminal at the Old Bailey; but in the countenance of a handsome young man, was received as the unfailing marks of "a pure ingenuous soul."

I had been too long at school to be ashamed of wearing laurels I had never won; and, having often received a flogging which I did not deserve, I thought myself equally well entitled to any advantages which the chances of war might throw in my way; so having set my tender conscience at rest, I sat myself down between my new mistress and her father, and made

a most delightful breakfast. Miss Somerville, although declared out of danger by the doctor, was still languid, but able to continue her journey; and as they had not many miles farther to go, Mr. Somerville proposed a delay of an hour or two.

Breakfast ended, he quitted the room to arrange for their departure, and I found myself *tête-à-tête* with the young lady. During this short absence, I found out that she was an only daughter, and that her mother was dead; she again introduced the subject of my family name, and I found also that before Mrs. Somerville's death, my father had been on terms of great intimacy with Emily's parents. I had not replied to Mr. Somerville's question. A similar one was now asked by his daughter; and so closely was I interrogated by her coral lips and searching blue eyes, that I could not tell a lie. It would have been a horrid aggravation of guilt, so I honestly owned that I was the son of her father's friend, Mr. Mildmay.

"Good Heaven!" said she, "why had you not told my father so?"

"Because I must have said a great deal more; besides," added I, making her my confidante, "I am the midshipman whom Mr. Somerville supposes to be in the Mediterranean, and I ran away from my father's house last night."

Although I was as concise as possible in my story, I had not finished before Mr. Somerville came in.

"Oh, papa," said his daughter, "this young gentleman is Frank Mildmay, after all."

I gave her a reproachful glance for having betrayed my secret; her father was astonished —she looked confused, and so did I.

Nothing now remained for me but an open and candid confession, taking especial care, however, to conceal the part I had acted in throwing the stone. Mr. Somerville reproved me very sharply, which I thought was taking a great liberty; but he softened it down by adding,

"If you knew how dear the interests of your family are to me, you would not be surprised at my assuming the tone of a parent."

I looked at Emily, and pocketed the affront.

"And, Frank," pursued he, "when I tell you, that, although the distance between your father's property and mine has in some measure interrupted our long intimacy, I have been watching your career in the service with interest, you will, perhaps, take my advice, and return home. Do not let me have to regret that one to whom I am under such obligations should be too proud to acknowledge a fault. I admire a high spirit in a good cause; but towards a parent it can never be justified. It may be unpleasant to you; but I will prepare the way by writing to your father: and do you stay here till you hear from me. I should wish for the pleasure of your company at —— Hall; but your father has prior claims; and I hardly need tell you, that once restored and reconciled

to him, I expect as long a visit as you can afford to pay me. Think on what I have said; and, in the mean time, as I dare say your finances are not very flourishing,"—(thinks I, you are a witch!)—"allow me to leave this ten pound note in your hands." This part of his request was much more readily complied with than the other.

He left the room, as he said, to pay the bill; but, I believe, it was to give his fair daughter an opportunity of trying the effect of her eloquence on my proud spirit, which gave no great promise of concession. A few minutes with *her*, did more than both the fathers could have effected, the most powerful motive to submission being the certainty that I could not visit at her father's house until a reconciliation had taken place between me and mine. I therefore told her that, at her solicitation, I would submit to any liberal terms.

This being agreed to, her father observed that the carriage was at the door, shook hands with

me, and led his lovely daughter away, whose last nod and parting look confirmed all my good resolutions.

Reader, whatever you may think of the trifling incidents of the last twenty-four hours, you will find that they involved consequences of vast importance to the writer of this memoir. Pride induced me to quit my father's house; revenge stimulated me to an act which brought the heroine of this story on the stage, for such will Emily Somerville prove to be. But, alas! by what fatal infatuation was Mr. Somerville induced to leave me my own master at an inn, with ten pounds in my pocket, instead of taking me with him to his own residence, and keeping me till he had heard from my father? The wisest men often err in points, which at first appear of trivial importance, but which prove in the sequel to have been fraught with evil.

Left to myself, I ruminated for some time on what had occurred; and the beautiful Emily

Somerville having vanished from my sight, I recollected the little fascinating actress from whom I had so suddenly parted on the preceding night; still I must say, that I was so much occupied with the charms of her successor, that I sought the society of the youthful Melpomene more with a view to beguile the time, than from any serious prepossession.

I found her in the large room, where they were all assembled. She received me as a friend, and evinced a partiality which flattered my vanity. In three days, I received a letter from Mr. Somerville, enclosing one from my father, whose only request was, that I would return home, and meet him as if nothing unpleasant had occurred. This I determined to do; but I had now been so long in the company of Eugenia (for that was the actress's name), that I could not very easily part with her. In fact, I was desperately in love, after my fashion; and though perhaps I could not with truth say the same of her, yet that she

was partial to my company was evident. I had obtained from her the history of her life, which, in the following chapter, I shall give in her own words.

CHAPTER X.

She is virtuous, though bred behind the scenes; and, whatever pleasure she may feel in seeing herself applauded on the stage, she would much rather pass for a modest girl, than for a good actress.

Gil Blas.

"My father," said Eugenia, "was at the head of this company of strolling players; my mother was a young lady of respectable family, at a boarding-school. She took a fancy to my father in the character of 'Rolla;' and, being of course deservedly forsaken by her friends, became a prima donna. I was the only fruits of this connexion, and the only solace of my

mother in her affliction; for she bitterly repented the rash step she had taken.

"At five years old, my father proposed that I should take the character of Cupid, in the opera of Telemaque. To this my mother strongly objected, declaring that I never should go upon the stage; and this created a disunion which was daily embittered by my father's unkind treatment, both of my mother and myself. I never left her side for fear of a kick, which I was sure to receive when I had not her protection. She employed all her spare time in my instruction, and, notwithstanding the folly she had been guilty of, she was fully competent to the task.

"When I was seven years old, a relation of my mother's died, and bequeathed fifteen thousand pounds, to be equally divided between her and her two sisters, securing my mother's portion in such a manner as to prevent my father having any controul over it. As soon as my mother obtained this information, she

quitted my father, who was too prudent to spend either his time or his money in pursuit of her. Had he been aware of her sudden change of fortune, he might have acted differently.

"We arrived in London, took possession of the property, which was all in the funds; and then, fearing my father might gain information of her wealth, my mother set off for France, taking me with her. There I passed the happiest days of my life; my mother spared no pains, and went to considerable expense in my education. The best masters were provided for me in singing, dancing, and music; and so much did I profit by their instruction, that I was very soon considered a pretty specimen of my countrywomen, and much noticed accordingly.

"From France we went to Italy, where we remained two years, and where my vocal education was completed. My poor mother lived all this time on the principal of her fortune, concluding it would last for ever. At last she was taken ill

of a fever, and died. This was about a year ago, when I was only sixteen. Delirious many days before her death, she could give me no instructions as to my future conduct, or where to apply for resources. I happened, however, to know her banker in London, and wrote to him immediately; in answer, he informed me that a balance of forty pounds was all that remained in his hands.

"I believe he cheated me, but I could not help it. My spirits were not depressed at this news: I sold all the furniture; paid the little debts to the tradespeople, and with nine pounds in my pocket, took my place in the Diligence, and sat off for London, where I arrived without accident. I read in the newspaper, at the inn, that a provincial company was in want of a young actress for genteel comedy. My mother's original passion for the stage had never left her; and, during our stay in France, we often amused ourselves with *la petite comédie*, in which I always took a part.

"Without resources, I thought a precarious mode of obtaining a livelihood was better than a vicious one, and determined to try my fortune on the stage; so I ordered a hack, and drove to the office indicated. I felt a degree of comfort, when I discovered that my father was the advertising manager, although I was certain he would never recognize me. I was engaged by the agent, the bargain was approved of, and in a day or two after, was ordered to a country town, some miles from the metropolis.

"I arrived; my father did not know me, nor did I wish that he should, as I did not intend to remain long in the company. In short, I aspired to the London boards; but aware that I wanted practice, without which it would have been useless to have offered myself, I accepted this situation without delay, and applied with great assiduity to the study of my profession. My father, I found, had married again; and my joining the company added nothing to his domestic harmony, my step-mother becoming

immoderately jealous of me; but I took good care to keep my own secret, and never exposed myself for one moment to any suspicion of my character, which hitherto, thank Heaven, has been pure, though I am exposed to a thousand temptations, and beset by the actors, to become the wife of one, or the mistress of another.

"Among those who proposed the latter, was my honoured father, to whom, on that account, I was one day on the point of revealing the secret of my birth, as the only means of saving myself from his importunities. He was, at last, taken ill, and died, only three months ago, not before I had completed my engagements, and obtained an increased salary of one guinea and a half per week. It is my intention to quit the company at the expiration of my present term, which will take place in two months, for I am miserable here, although I am quite at a loss to know what will be my future destination."

In return for her confidence, I imparted as much of my history as I thought it necessary

for her to know. I became deeply fascinated —I forgot Miss Somerville, and answered my father's letter respectfully and kindly. He informed me that he had procured my name to be entered on the books of the guard-ship, at Spithead; but, that I might gain time to loiter by the side of Eugenia, I begged his permission to join my ship without returning home, alleging as a reason, that delay would soften down any asperity of feeling occasioned by the late fracas. This in his answer he agreed to, enclosing a handsome remittance; and the same post brought a pressing invitation from Mr. Somerville to come to —— Hall.

My little actress informed me that the company would set out in two days for the neighbourhood of Portsmouth; and, as I found they would be more than a fortnight in travelling, I determined to accept the invitation, and quit her for the present. I had been more than a week in her society. At parting, I professed my admiration and love. Silence and a starting

tear were her only acknowledgment. I saw that she was not displeased; and I left her with joyful anticipations.

But what did I anticipate, as I rolled heedlessly along in the chaise to —— Hall? Sensual gratification at the expense of a poor defenceless orphan, whose future life would be clouded with misery. I could see my wickedness, and moralize upon it; but the devil was triumphant within me, and I consoled myself with the vulgar adage, "Needs must when the devil drives." With this, I dismissed the subject to think of Emily, whose residence was now in sight.

I arrived at —— Hall, was kindly received and welcomed by both father and daughter; but on this visit, I must not dwell. When I reflect on it, I hate myself and human nature! Could I be trusted? yet I inspired unbounded confidence. Was I not as vicious as one of my age could be? Yet I made them believe I was almost perfection. Did I deserve to be happy?

Yet I was so, and more so than I had ever been before or ever have been since. I was like the serpent in Eden, though without his vile intentions. Beauty and virtue united to keep my passions in subjection. When they had nothing to feed on, they concealed themselves in the inmost recesses of my bosom.

Had I remained always with Emily, I should have been reclaimed; but when I quitted her, I lost all my good feelings and good resolutions; not, however, before the bright image of virtue had lighted up in my bosom a holy flame which has never been entirely extinguished. Occasionally dimmed, it has afterwards burnt up with renewed brightness; and, as a beacon-light, has often guided me through perils that might have overwhelmed me.

Compelled at last to quit this earthly Paradise, I told her, at parting, that I loved her, adored her; and to prove that I was in earnest, and that she believed me, I obtained a lock of her hair. When I left —— Hall, it was my

intention to have joined my ship, as I had agreed with my father; but the temptation to follow up my success with the fair and unfortunate Eugenia, was too strong to be resisted; at least I thought so, and therefore hardly made an effort to conquer it. True, I did, *pro forma*, make my appearance on board the guard-ship, had my name entered on the books, that I might not lose my time of servitude, and that I might also deceive my father. All this being duly accomplished, I obtained leave of absence from the first-lieutenant, an old acquaintance, who, in a ship crowded with supernumerary midshipmen, was but too happy in getting rid of me and my chest.

I hastened to the rendezvous, and found the company in full activity. Eugenia, when we parted, expressed a wish that our acquaintance might not be renewed. She feared for her own character as well as mine, and very sensibly and feelingly observed that my professional prospects might be blasted; but, having made up

my mind, I had an answer for all her objections. I presented myself to the manager, and requested to be admitted into the company.

Having taken this step, Eugenia saw that my attachment was not to be overcome; that I was willing to make any sacrifice for her. I was accepted; my salary was fixed at one guinea per week, with seven shillings extra for playing the flute. I was indebted for my ready admission into this society to my voice: the manager wanted a first singer. My talent in this science was much admired. I signed my agreement the same evening for two months; and, being presented in due form to my brethren of the buskin, joined the supper-table, where there was more of abundance than of delicacies. I sat by Eugenia, whose decided preference for me excited the jealousy of my new associates. I measured them all with my eye, and calculated that, with fair play, I was the best man among them.

The play-bills announced the tragedy of

Romeo and Juliet. I was to be the hero, and four days were allowed me to prepare myself. The whole of that time was passed in the company of Eugenia, who, while she gave me unequivocal proofs of attachment, admitted of no freedom. The day of rehearsal arrived, I was found perfect, and loudly applauded by the company. Six o'clock came, the curtain rose, and sixteen tallow candles displayed my person to an audience of about one hundred people.

No one who has not been in the situation can form any idea of the nervous feeling of a *débutant* on such an occasion. The troop, with the exception of Eugenia, was of a description of persons whom I despise, and the audience mostly clodhoppers who could scarcely read or write; yet I was abashed, and acquitted myself badly, until the balcony scene, when I became enlivened and invigorated by the presence and smiles of my mistress. In the art of love-making I was at home, particularly with the

Juliet of that night. I entered at once into the spirit of the great dramatist, and the curtain dropped amidst thunders of applause. My name was announced for a repetition of the play, and I was dragged forward before the curtain, to thank the grocers, tallow-chandlers, cheesemongers, and ploughmen for the great honour they had done me. Heavens! how I felt the degradation; but it was too late.

The natural result of this constant intercourse with Eugenia, may easily be anticipated. I do not attempt to extenuate my fault—it was inexcusable, and has brought its punishment; but for poor, forlorn Eugenia I plead; her virtue fell before my importunity and my personal appearance. She fell a victim to those unhappy circumstances of which I basely took the advantage.

Two months I had lived with her, as man and wife; I forgot my family, profession, and even Emily. I was now upon the ship's books: and though no one knew anything of me, my

father was ignorant of my absence from my ship—everything was sacrificed to Eugenia. I acted with her, strolled the fields, and vowed volumes of stuff about constancy. When we played, we filled the house; and some of the more respectable townspeople offered to introduce us to the London boards, but this we both declined. We cared for nothing but the society of each other.

And now that time has cooled the youthful ardour that carried me away, let me do justice to this unfortunate girl. She was the most natural, unaffected, and gifted person I ever met with. Boundless wit, enchanting liveliness, a strong mind, and self-devotion towards me, the first, and, I firmly believe, the only object she ever loved; and her love for me ceased only with her life. Her faults, though not to be defended, may be palliated and deplored, because they were the defects of education. Her infant days were passed in scenes of domestic strife, profligacy, and penury; her maturer

years, under the guidance of a weak mother, were employed in polishing, not strengthening, the edifice of her understanding, and the external ornaments only served to accelerate the fall of the fabric, and to increase the calamity.

Bred up in France, and almost in the fervour of the Revolution, she had imbibed some of its libertine opinions; among others, that marriage was a civil contract, and if entered into at all, might be broken at the pleasure of either party. This idea was strengthened and confirmed in her by the instances she had seen of matrimonial discord, particularly in her own family. When two people, who fancied they loved, had bound themselves by an indissoluble knot, they felt from that time the irksomeness of restraint, which they would never have felt if they had possessed the power of separation; and would have lived happily together, if they had not been compelled to do it. "How long you, my dear Frank," said Eugenia to me one day, "may continue to love me, I know not; but

the moment you cease to love me, it were better that we parted."

These were certainly the sentiments of an enthusiast; but Eugenia lived long enough to acknowledge her error, and to bewail its fatal effects on her peace of mind.

I was awoke from this dream of happiness, by a curious incident. I thought it disastrous at the time, but am now convinced that it was fraught with good, since it brought me back to my profession, recalled me to a sense of duty, and shewed me the full extent of my disgraceful situation. My father, it appears, was still ignorant of my absence from my ship, and had come down, without my knowledge, on a visit to a friend in the neighbourhood. Hearing of the "interesting young man" who had acquired so much credit in the character of Apollo, as well as of Romeo, he was persuaded to see the performance.

I was in the act of singing "Pray Goody," when my eyes suddenly met those of my papa, who was staring like the head of Gorgon: and

though his gaze did not turn me to stone, it turned me sick. I was stupified, forgot my part, ran off, and left the manager and the music to make the best of it. My father, who could hardly believe his eyes, was convinced when he saw my confusion. I ran into the dressing-room, where, before I had time to divest myself of Apollo's crown and petticoat, I was accosted by my enraged parent, and it is quite impossible for me to describe (taking my costume into consideration) how very much like a fool I looked.

My father sternly demanded how long I had been thus honourably employed. This was a question which I had anticipated, and, therefore, very readily replied, "only two or three days;" that I had left Portsmouth for what we called "a lark," and I thought it very amusing.

"Very amusing, indeed, Sir," said my father; "and pray, may I venture to inquire, without the fear of having a lie told me, how long this 'Lark,' as you call it, is to continue?"

"Oh, to-morrow," said I, "my leave expires, and then I must return to my ship."

"Allow me the honour of keeping your company," said my father; "and I shall beg your captain to impose some little restraint as to time and distance on your future excursions."

Then rising in his tone, he added, "I am ashamed of you, Sir; the son of a gentleman is not likely to reap any advantage from the society of strolling vagabonds and prostitutes. I had reason to think, by your last letters from Portsmouth, that you were very differently employed."

To this very sensible and parental reproof I answered, with a demure and innocent countenance (for I soon regained my presence of mind) that I did not think there had been any harm in doing that which most of the officers of the navy did at one time or another (an assertion, by-the-by, much too general); that we often got up plays on board of ship, and that I wanted to practice.

"Practice, then with your equals," said my

father, "not in company with rogues and street-walkers."

I felt that the latter name was meant for Eugenia, and was very indignant; but fortunately kept all my anger within board; and, knowing I was "all in the wrong," allowed my father to fire away without returning a shot. He concluded his lecture by commanding me to call upon him the next morning, at ten o'clock, and left me to change my dress, and to regain my good-humour. I need not add that I did not return to the stage that night, but left the manager to make his peace with the audience in any way he thought proper.

When I informed Eugenia of the evening's adventure, she was inconsolable: to comfort her, I offered to give up my family and my profession, and live with her. At these words, Eugenia suddenly recollected herself. "Frank," said she, "all that has happened is right. We are both wrong. I felt that I was too happy, and shut my eyes to the danger I dared not face.

Your father is a man of sense; his object is to reclaim you from inevitable ruin. As for me, if he knew of our connexion, he could only despise me. He sees his son living with strolling players; and it is his duty to cut the chain, no matter by what means. You have an honourabl and distinguished career marked out for you; will never be an obstacle to your father's jus ambition or your prosperity. I did hope for a happier destiny; but love blinded my eyes: I am now undeceived. If your father cannot respect me, he shall at least admire the resolution of the unhappy Eugenia. I have tenderly loved you, my dearest Frank, and never have loved any other, nor ever shall; but part we must: Heaven only knows for how long a time. I am ready to make every sacrifice to your fame and character—the only proof I can give of my unbounded love for you."

I embraced her as she uttered these words; and we spent a great part of the night in making preparations for my departure, arrangements

for our future correspondence, and, if possible, for our future meetings. I left her early on the following morning; and with a heavy, I had almost said a broken heart, appeared before my father. He was, no doubt, aware of my attachment and the violence of my passions, and prudently endeavoured to soothe them. He received me affectionately, did not renew the subject of the preceding night, and we became very good friends.

In tearing myself away from Eugenia, I found the truth of the French adage, "*Ce n'est que la première pas qui coûte*;" my heart grew lighter as I increased my distance from her. My father, to detach my mind still more from the unfortunate subject, spoke much of family affairs, of my brothers and sisters, and lastly named Mr. Somerville and Emily: here he touched on the right chord. The remembrance of Emily revived the expiring embers of virtue, and the recollection of the pure and perfect mistress of —— Hall, for a time, dismissed the

unhappy Eugenia from my mind. I told my father that I would engage never to disgrace him or myself any more, if he would promise not to name my late folly to Mr. Somerville or his daughter.

"That," said my father, "I promise most readily; and with the greater pleasure, since I see, in your request, the strongest proof of the sense of your error."

This conversation passed on our road to Portsmouth, where we had no sooner arrived than my father, who was acquainted with the port-admiral, left me at the "George," while he crossed the street to call on him. The result of this interview was, that I should be sent out immediately in some sea-going ship with a "tight captain."

There was one of this description just about to sail for Basque Roads; and, at the admiral's particular request, I was received on board as a supernumerary, there being no vacancies in the ship. My father, who by this time was

wide awake to all my wiles, saw me on board; and then flattering himself that I was in safe custody, took his leave and returned to the shore. I very soon found that I was under an embargo, and was not on any account to be allowed leave of absence.

This was pretty nearly what I expected; but I had my own resources. I had now learned to laugh at trifles, and I cared little about this decided step which his prudence induced him to take.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

INTERESTING WORKS

JUST PUBLISHED BY

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

---

1. ZILLAH; A TALE of the HOLY CITY. By the Author of "Brambletye House," "The Tor Hill," and "Reuben Apsley." Second Edition. In 3 vols. post 8vo. 31s. 6d.

"Viewing it as a work of information on a most interesting subject, presented in a very agreeable form, we recommend its perusal to all persons of leisure. The religious world especially ought to congratulate themselves on its appearance: they are usually debarred from the pleasure of reading works of imagination— here is one which might be preached from the pulpit; it is a 'sacred performance,' and as legitimate in a church, as a piece of Handel or Horsley. It may throw light upon the Scriptures; it may even make the searching of them a lighter task; while the most scrupulous reader cannot condemn the author for having rashly or profanely approached subjects which he might deem could not be handled without impiety in a work of fiction."—*Spectator.*

2. TALES of the GREAT ST. BERNARD. Second Edition. In 3 vols. post. 8vo. 31s. 6d.

CONTENTS.—The Englishman's Tale—The Wallachian's Tale—The Captain's Tale—The Augustine's Tale — The Englishwoman's Tale—The Spaniard s Tale—The Italian's Tale, &c. &c.

"These tales are such as only genius of the highest order could have conceived. They contain many lessons of practical wisdom, and enforce many moral and religious truths."—*Gentleman's Magazine.*

3. ENGLISH FASHIONABLES AT HOME; a Novel, by the Author of "ENGLISH FASHIONABLES ABROAD." 3 vols. post 8vo. 31s. 6d.

4. THE ANGLO-IRISH, or LOVE and POLITICS; a TALE of the NINETEENTH CENTURY. A Novel. In 3 vols. post 8vo. 31s. 6d.

"The incidents of Irish history, and the character, notions, feelings, and habits, engendered by the unprecedented situation of the people, combine to form a source of interest as fertile and as various as that from which the great Novelist of the North has created his Scotch historical Romances."—*Morning Chronicle.*

5. THE PROTESTANT; a Tale of the Reign of Queen Mary. By the Author of "De Foix," and "The White Hoods." 3 vols. post 8vo. 31s. 6d.

Works published by Henry Colburn.

6. TALES of WOMAN: or Illustrations of the Female Character—The Wife—The Mother—The Daughter. In 2 vols. post 8vo. 18s.

7. WESLEY and HIS DISCIPLE; WHITFIELD'S CONVERT, and other Tales. By the Author of "Letters from the East." 2 vols. post 8vo. 21s.

8. THE CROPPY. A Tale of the Irish Rebellion. By the Authors of "the O'HARA TALES," "the NOWLANS," &c. 3 vols. post 8vo. 31s. 6d.

"Delighted as we have been with all the previous productions of these gifted authors, it was reserved for the 'Croppy' alone to impress us with any idea of the full extent of their genius and capabilities. The story itself glows with the very essence of romance and excitation."—*Literary Chronicle.*

9. The RED ROVER. By the Author of "The Spy," "The Pilot," "The Prairie," &c. Second Edition. 3 vols. post 8vo. 28s. 6d.

"Another tale of the sea, a companion worthy of the Pilot, and superior to any description of nautical scenes hitherto laid before the public, not even excepting those of our own Smollet. Cooper, the American novelist, has no living superior.—*Scotsman.*

10. THE HISTORY OF GEORGE GODFREY, RELATED BY HIMSELF. In 3 vols. post 8vo. price 28s. 6d.

"The pages of George Godfrey remind us frequently of the author of Tom Jones. The same minute acquaintance with a peculiar department of life, from which the great mass of mankind is by various circumstances entirely excluded, and we had almost said, the same graphic power in giving animation to scenes apparently indifferent in themselves are, we think, visible in the two productions."—*Monthly Review.*

11. SALATHIEL, a STORY of the PAST, the PRESENT, and the FUTURE. SECOND EDITION, revised, 3 vols. post 8vo. 27s.

"One of the most splendid productions among works of fiction that the age has brought forth."—*Athenæum.*

12. THE MAN OF TWO LIVES, a Narrative, written by Himself. 2 vols. post 8vo. 18s.

"Whether this be, or be not, I'll not swear."

SHAKSPEARE.